SCRIPTING ANXIETY/SCRIPTING IDENTITY: INDIAN MUTINY, HISTORY, AND THE COLONIAL IMAGINARY, 1857-1911

BY

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DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Scripting Anxiety/Scripting Identity examines the impact of the 1857 Indian Mutiny on British and Indian cultural consciousness and collective memory. I focus on anxious articulations about material objects, racial and sexual identities, and religion to argue these are symptomatic of a greater problem in mutiny narratives. Namely, the failure to situate the event, write or define it, in context of grand narratives. I show anxieties about objects, identities, and religion can be read from two corresponding directions. First, as discursively representing the dangers posed by the rebellion to political hegemony and established symbolic systems. And, second, as symptomatic of desires for reclaiming authority and re-constituting subjectivities. My task has been one of accentuating the tension between these two, suggesting their responsibility in the construction of the event's affective dispensations in the Anglo-Indian mindscape, and finally, presenting a hypothetical theorization on the relationship between subaltern insurgency and colonialism.

This dissertation is the centerpiece of an active research agenda that looks at, first, representations of the Mutiny in "postcolonial" British and Indian writings in comparison to colonial narratives; and, second, how anxiety-ridden articulations about the Mutiny map onto present-day transnational concerns over "homeland" insecurities as manifested in literature, film, and new media.

To Maan Kumar Basu Thakur
Martyr, Royal Indian Naval Mutiny 1946
Granduncle
&
My Grandparents

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

IOR ……India Office Records, British Library.

IOR/MSS ……India Office Records, Manuscripts.

FSUP ……..*Freedom Struggle in Uttar Pradesh*.

BB ……*Bankim Rachanaboli*.

RR ……*Rabindra Rachanaboli*, Vishwabharati.

RRWB ……*Rabindra Rachanaboli*, West Bengal Government.

SE ……*Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*.

SL ……*Selected Letters of Rabindranath Tagore*.

M&P ……*The Mahatma and the Poet. Letters and Debates between Gandhi and Tagore 1915-1941*.

ARA ……The Advice of the Royal Army.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most brutal conflicts fought between a colonizing power and colonized peoples in the history of the British Empire began in the summer of 1857, when Indian Sepoys of the British East India Company's army mutinied. In what was to become, soon, a full-fledged and bloody war between the colonial state and the civic populations of Northern and Central regions of the subcontinent, each side outweighed the other in rampant displays of barbaric violence and gory massacres. The conflict raged on for over two years before British control was reestablished, and rebel resistance losing its organized structure morphed into various local and, at times, global pockets of resistance against British imperialism.[1] History named the events of 1857 variously as the 'Indian Mutiny,' 'The First War of Indian Independence,' 'The Sepoy War,' 'The Great Rebellion,' 'The 1857 Uprising.'

The fascination with the Mutiny, however, did not subside with the defeat of the mutineers. In the last hundred and fifty years, hundreds of books have been written on the Uprising in India and Britain alone. These include histories, memoirs, diaries, correspondences, fictions, and more recently films, video games, and graphic novels. The fascination with the Mutiny, however, did not subside with the defeat of the 'mutineers.' In the last hundred and fifty years, hundreds of books have been written on the subject in India and Britain. These include histories, memoirs, diaries, correspondences, fictions and, more recently, films, video games, and

[1] Contrary to opinion current in the West that the Mutiny lasted for only one year, a completely fallacious notion based on claims made by nineteenth century British writers, Indian historians show that the Mutiny was not successfully put down before end of 1859. Documentary evidence also suggests that after 1859, rebels continued to resist and harass the British administration on their own and, at other times, by joining resistance movements in neighboring areas like the North-West Provinces in the West and the Taiping rebels in the East. Researchers also identify subsequent peasant and tribal movements against the British government in South Asia as bearing tell-tale signs of the Fifty-seven mutineers. Military strategies adopted and social demands voiced by the peasants during these local conflagrations appear to have drawn strongly from those of the 1857 rebels. See, Sengupta ভারতীয় মহাবিদ্রোহ [Bharatiya Mahabidroho/The Great Indian Revolution]; essays in P.C. Joshi edited *Rebellion 1857: A Symposium*; and the recent two volume work by Amaresh Misra, *War of Civilisations*. See, also the 1857 *chronological table* prefixed to M. Ikram Chaghatai edited *1857In Muslim Historiography* 9-12.

graphic novels. According to one scholar, more than 80 novels were published between 1857 and 1970 in Britain alone, and more than half of these appeared in the nineteenth-century thus inaugurating the genre of "mutiny fiction." Indeed, given the large number of historical and fictional works on the Mutiny, and the repeated references in colonial and postcolonial geopolitical history to the Rebellion as an event of tremendous affective import, it is not a stretch to say that the Uprising was and remains laden with a peculiar energy within the Anglo-Indian imaginary. The question is: why?

Scholars are not in unison in answering this question. While some read the Uprising as responsible for effecting widespread changes in imperial governance, the transfer of power from the Company to the Crown being prompted by the rebellion, others have stated that "gauged purely in light of its empirical scale and its practical consequences" the Uprising does not seem an "outstandingly momentous historical event" (Herbert 1). Indeed, when the fifty-seven rebellion is compared with the Napoleonic wars or the Great Wars of the twentieth-century it appears minor. Yet the impact of the event on Anglo-Indian collective memory and cultural consciousness has been immense. At the turn of the nineteenth-century, Hilda Gregg, for instance, observed in a review essay written for the *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, "Of all the great events of this century, as they are reflected in fiction, the Indian Mutiny has taken the firmest hold on popular imagination" (218). Given the number of works on the Mutiny that have appeared since Gregg's comment, and repeated references in colonial and postcolonial geopolitical history to the rebellion as an event of tremendous affective import, it is not an exaggeration to say that the Mutiny was and remains fraught with a peculiar energy within Anglo-Indian imaginary.[2] The Mutiny is a *singular* event because no historical episode before

[2] Most recently, three mutiny fictions have been published: Julian Rathbone's *The Mutiny* in 2007, and Elaine di Rollo's *The Peachgrowers' Alamnac* and Anurag Kumar's *Recalcitrance*, both in 2008.

this and nothing since has generated as much interest and writing as it has in the last hundred and fifty odd years.

Scripting Anxiety/Scripting Identity studies the impact of the 1857 Indian Mutiny on colonial social psychology and the representations of the event in British and Indian writings to ask why this particular historical episode appealed to British and Indian writers of the nineteenth-century. It argues that the fascination with the Mutiny in literature and the hold of the event on Anglo-Indian cultural consciousness are best understood through an examination of conscious and unconscious articulations of anxiety over identity. Fusing archival research with theoretical analysis and close readings of a diverse body of texts – imperial histories, British fiction (canonical and non-canonical), Anglo-Indian writings, Bengali novels, nineteenth-century Indian writings in English, vernacular press reports, and subaltern-rebel pamphlets – I examine how multiple anxieties about material objects, racial and sexual identities, and religion dot mutiny narratives. Nervous articulations in these narratives I argue can be read from two corresponding directions. One, they discursively represent the dangers posed by the rebellion to political hegemony and imperial knowledge systems. And, two, as symptomatic of desires for reclaiming authority and re-constituting sovereign subjectivities. Cumulatively, these disclose a fundamental tension in mutiny narratives, namely the impossibility of cognitively mapping the sudden events of fifty-seven.

Simply put, *Scripting Anxiety* attempts to answer a question that has been variously asked and diversely rephrased in the last hundred and fifty odd years: "what was it?" (Kaye IOR/H 726). Was it a sepoy mutiny, a civil rebellion, a war of national liberation, or a clash of civilizations and religions? Through an exploration of direct as well as displaced representations of the event in British and Indian writings, I argue that the difficulty of signifying the Mutiny is

symptomatic of the impossibility of narration; and this consequently explains the affective hold of the event on the Anglo-Indian imaginary. To elaborate: Anxious articulations about material objects, racial and sexual identities, and religion are symptomatic of a greater problem in mutiny narratives. This dissertation takes up the task of investigating the singularity of the Mutiny by shifting focus from the political and social effects, though not ignoring them altogether, to the affective import of the event on Anglo-Indian cultural consciousness and collective memory.

Critical scholarship in the last hundred-odd years have mostly concentrated on reading the Uprising as a historical event; adumbrating the political significance of the incident within the history of British empire, or, in context of literary and culture studies, by focusing on imaginative representations of the Mutiny in British fictional narratives.[3] Reading the Mutiny as a moment of catalytic change, these contend that the Uprising marks a shift in Anglo-Indian colonial history towards a revisionary politics of policies and consciousness. The Mutiny is seen as leading concurrently towards the politicization of the colonized and the racialization of imperial politics. The fallacy of reading the Mutiny in terms of such a functional agency is evident: it says, before 1857, the colonized lacked political consciousness and the colonizer was not overtly racist. Such critical emphases on consciousness and the Mutiny as a template for

[3] Though the number of specialized works on the subject is few, either from the postcolonial perspective or Victorian studies, there is hardly any postcolonial or Victorian work to come out in the last twenty-odd years without referencing the event or mentioning its tremendous significance in the annals of Anglo-Indian colonial history. Significant amongst these are Brantlinger's essay 'The Well of Cawnpore' in *Rule of Darkness*, Sharpe's discussions of the Mutiny in her *Allegories of Empire*, Paxton's 'Mobilizing Rape' in her *Writing Under the Raj*, and Gautam Chakaravarty's recent book, *Indian Mutiny and the British Imagination*. Apart from these, I also engage works that refer to the Mutiny or contextualize it in relation to discussions of British mid- and late- nineteenth century novels. These are too numerous to mention here. I discuss and cite these in my chapters. Studies on the impact of the Mutiny on Indian literature are few in numbers. The most recent work is Shankar Prasad Chakrabarty's *Bangasahitye Mahabidroho* (The Great Revolution in Bengali Literature). A number of articles on the subject also exist. These have been referenced mostly in chapters 4 and 5. To give an account of histories written in both India and Britain, to leave alone the rest of the world, would tantamount to running this footnote for hundred pages. I reference these historical works in my individual chapters. It must be noted though that *still* today hardly any work on the Mutiny have attempted to draw on Indian histories written in vernacular languages of the subcontinent. Few studies have from time to time mentioned works written in English by Indian historians like S.N. Sen, R.C. Majumdar, S.B. Chaudhuri etc., while ignoring others like Syed Moinul Haq's *The Great Revolution of 1857*, written in English and published by Pakistan Historical Society in 1968.

investigating and disclosing consciousness have led to the marginalization of the question of affect that the Mutiny as a cut enunciates. Except for Christopher Herbert's 2008 book, *War of No Pity*, there have been no attempts to study the Uprising as a *breach* affectively vitiating imperial and colonial social psychologies. I should note here that though Herbert's book and my dissertation embark from the same platform, as far as we both investigate the question of affect, our theoretical and ideological positions are radically different. I will return to a discussion of Herbert shortly. Before that let me finish this brief review of existing literature.

Recent studies, including the only "book-length study that might be deemed postcolonial," that is, Gautam Chakravarty's *Indian Mutiny and British Imagination*, have tended to ignore both the issue of anxiety and the question of Indian cultural consciousness from discussions of the Mutiny altogether (Freedgood 'Anti-post' 551). Chakravarty's work, for instance, presents a literary and historical analysis of the representation of the Mutiny in British nineteenth- and twentieth-century fiction – an interpretative study that shows how the rebellion was represented in mutiny fiction in continuation with as well as differently from other existing representations of the colonial space. Most works in the field discuss the cultural materialist angles – how discourses around the Uprising validated or inscribed societal and cultural values such as gender, race, religion, nation etc.[4] While thoroughly agreeing with these studies, I believe a *fundamental* issue passes unacknowledged in these works: what is the reason behind the fascination with the Mutiny?

Existing scholarship also ignore the profound and evident cross-cultural resonances of the Mutiny, disregarding Indian bourgeois writings as well as rebel-subaltern documents. In failing

[4] See any of the works I mention above starting with Brantlinger's essay that focuses on the rise of racism in the post-Mutiny period to recent dissertations such as Aishwarya Lakshmi's 'Land, Event, Empire: Colonial aesthetics and the Indian Mutiny of 1857' or articles like Priti Joshi's 'Mutiny Echoes: India, Britons, and Charles Dickens's *A Tale of Two Cities*.'

to critically investigate how the Mutiny impacted and shaped the writings and thoughts of the colonized, especially the native national bourgeois – their imaginaries of colonial modernity and the nation – existing studies offer only a partial view of the Mutiny.[5] Similarly, scholars like Partha Chatterjee and Sumit Sarkar who have otherwise meticulously unpacked the ideology and discourses of late-nineteenth century Indian nationalist thought have tended to avoid discussing the Mutiny. As a result, there have been little or no investigation on how the Mutiny affected and shaped the writings and thoughts of the colonized, especially the native bourgeois and their imaginaries of colonial modernity and the nation. It is interesting to study how starting as a derivative discourse, the Mutiny as a product of feudal miscreancy and regressive movement against the progressive and beneficial British socio-political force, it has now become the 'First War of National Independence.'[6] To understand the singularity of the event, its affective reconstruction of the colonial space and subjectivities, Indian writings must be read alongside the British. For imperial consciousness was shaped as much by British narratives as by the indigenous cultural negotiations with and discourses on the event. Events in the colony like the Ilbert Bill Act or Age of Bill crisis or militant nationalism revived the memory of and interest in the event in Britain, shaping and contouring metropolitan representations.[7] Post 1857, anxiety over the Mutiny affectively informs all fears and doubts and indecisions regarding the colonial Other. Subsequent leaguers of the empire such as the Mahdi crisis in Sudan in the 1880s and

[5] Lakshmi's unpublished dissertation announces a comparative approach and considers Indian texts such as Mirza Ghalib's diaries. But its focus, dominantly, is on studying how geographical and architectural spaces were affected materially and in imagination by the Uprising. In doing this she considers the reality and material transformation of spaces like the city of Delhi following the rebellion. The possibility of how affect as constitutive of and constituted by representations of spaces may problematize these writings does not figure in her work. Nancy Paxton studies a postcolonial Mutiny novel, *The Devil's Wind: Nana Saheb's Story*, by Manohar Malgaonkar in the brief concluding section of her book *Writing Under the Raj*.

[6] For the influence of colonial discourses on Indian nationalist thought, see Chatterjee *Colonial Discourse and Nationalist Thought* and *The Nation and Its Fragments*; Sanghari & Suresh Vaid edited *Recasting Women*. For a recent study on the impact of colonial discourse on 'Hindi' speaking India, see Goswami *Producing India*.

[7] For a study on how events in the colony shaped British representations and political ideology see Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity*.

even present day concerns with 'Islamic' terrorism in the wake of 9/11 have found in the 1857 Mutiny a template for explaining geo-political issues and for discoursing on the irreversible *différanced* character of the racial, religious, political, and sexual Other. *Scripting Anxiety* is the first work that attempts to study the dialectical evolution of the Mutiny as an Event through British, Indian, and subaltern-rebel writings.

The Mutiny as Event

Somewhere between the grotesque inhuman torture of the colonized and the self-righteous, self-consolidating rhetoric of the colonizer, a dormant cancerous growth wedges and forms itself into a gap. Constituted at the instant of the *fundamental gesture* that characterizes colonialism – the lexicalization of the colonized as an Other and the reproduction of the colonizer as a Self inverse to that Other – this fault remains most commonly plastered under appearances and representations, announcing itself only through moments of conflict and crisis. The temporal instance of conflict girding the enunciation of this gap and discourses representing the encounter of the self with the fissure constitute the moment of colonial conflict as an *event*. An Event, to quote Alan Badiou, is that which is "subtracted from all experience." It is "ontologically un-founded and the transcendentally discontinuous" (Badiou 42). In other words, an Event is outside of representation. It can be "experienced only through the production (or reproduction)" of thought, and this thought "constitutes (or reconstitutes) a subjective disposition" (Badiou "Eight"). One may add that this reconstitution of subjective identity is never stable, leading to repetition. The multi-faceted, multi-directional, and multi-sequential character of the Event scuttles all attempts at instituting a Master Signifier that can act as a quilting point for objectively describing the Event. The Event is, consequently, atonal or lacks a point.

Though the Event may itself be outside of discourse, or impossible to discourse, representations of the event and reconstitutions of subjectivity through these representations survive as "eventual statements" indexing the vanished Event and the subject constituted in effect (Badiou "Eight"). Both Badiou and Zizek affirm that a true event is not "merely a negative gesture, but opens up a positive dimension" (Zizek "On Badiou"). An Event is composed of two parallel dimensions – "a dimension of structure" best studied through interruptions caused and appearances of supernumerary terms, and, "a dimension of the history of life," or the Event as a narrative of becoming (Badiou 37). In Lacanese: an Event can be identified as containing three distinct dimensions. (1) The event as a radical cut, atonal in character and reproducible partially at the level of thought; or the Event as real. (2) The Event as symbolic – supernumerary terms surface as symptoms to re-present the Event. (3) The Event as imaginary; re-constituting identity and formulating a myth of being, becoming, and difference at the level of discourse.

The representations of the Uprising in Anglo-Indian cultural imaginary and memory reflect all these dimensions at work. For instance, anxieties about known material objects transforming into unknown things and the failure of the administration to predict or contain circulation of rumors, I show in my chapters, represent the Mutiny as an Event outside the scope of rational understanding and narration. I also argue that the desire to represent the Event through anxiety-provoking particularities constitute an attempt at "signifiantisation by other means." The Mutiny as a whole is impossible to narrate and explicate; at best, day-to-day proceedings can be detailed, but never its general character.

The point about the singularity of 1857 is not an original point that I make.[8] As noted before, it was raised in the nineteenth-century by Hilda Gregg in 'The Indian Mutiny in Fiction.'

[8] The age-old debate about how to characterize or 'name' the event is another face of the same problematic. I think both, why the event is singular and what was the event, are questions that can be understood as articulating a

Most recently Christopher Herbert in his *The War of No Pity* has asked the same question: how do we explain the epochal significance attached to the event by Victorians? Let me therefore spend some time discussing their arguments.

Gregg points out the inexplicable hold of the Mutiny on British cultural imagination, but she does not offer any psychological explanation for it. Instead, she argues that Victorian writers found the dramatic elements of the event extremely appealing for writing fiction. The drama of the Mutiny satisfied both authorial intention to write sensational adventure fictions and readerly demand for tales of imperial derring-do. The most significant comment in Gregg's article about the singularity of the Mutiny comes late in the essay: "*the* novel of the Mutiny is still to be written" (230). Gautam Chakravarty in his discussion of Gregg's essay reads this statement literally. He says "what she meant by that emphatic article is left unclear, but it is likely that in her view […] such a novel must retail the mythography of the victors, perhaps more tastefully than its predecessors had done" (*Indian Mutiny* 4). Chakravarty's work as a result is a genealogical study on the history and character of mutiny fiction and representation of the "victors" in these novels. I understand the comment differently. I think it contains a much more nuanced understanding of the event – Gregg actually enunciates the difficulty of 'writing' the event. I translate Gregg's comment (in a Derridean sense) to pose it as 'why *the* mutiny fiction has *still* not been written?' I am convinced that the problem has to do with the nebulous, ambivalent, and disruptive character of the event and its role in dislocating and dismantling

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problem of signification: how to symbolize the 1857 Uprising within a structure of causality and history. One single word defines the events of 1857: uncertainty! And nothing provokes more uncertainty about the incident than the question: what was it? To situate my research in context of this still unresolved debate, let me rephrase my thesis as an attempt to address how uncertainty about the event was articulated and represented by British and Indians through their available representational spaces and what is the modality of anxiety, if any, characterizing these efforts and ideological determinations about the Mutiny. The question of how to symbolize the Mutiny finds expression at the level of language, through representations of the event. And, following the logic and politics of representation, it enjoys both representation (*darstellen*) and is qualified by ideological re-presentations (*vertreten*). For a discussion of representation and re-presentation, see Spivak 'Can the Subaltern.'

established knowledge systems and identity formations. This problem was not only upsetting for fiction writers, but also for historians and colonial administrators. None of them succeeded in producing an account and definition of the event. History as mediated by the colonial situation, and diverse popular and intellectual forces operating within that situation, found the Mutiny opaque, lying outside the scope of thorough investigation and definition. Gregg, in my opinion, should be credited for making a statement similar to Adorno's.[9]

Herbert, by contrast, and for the first time in the history of Mutiny scholarship, focuses on the psychological impact of the event on Victorian consciousness. Central to his arguments is the claim that 'stories' about the Uprising, first person accounts and news reports on the mindless blood-bath carried out by both parties involved in the conflict, traumatized Victorian collective consciousness. The presence of a large number of Victorian fictional and non-fictional writings on the Mutiny is, he contends, the sign of an attempt to engage with and resolve traumas spawned by the Uprising. Knowledge of British atrocities against the natives during those 'red years,' argues Herbert, created a crisis of identity and ideology in nineteenth-century Britain. Moral culpability of participating in, endorsing, and/or psychologically enjoying the inhuman reprisals of the rebels traumatized British identity as a Christian, modern, and racially superior nation. It is this trauma, and attempts at overwriting it through direct and displaced narratives on the Mutiny, according to Herbert, explains the singular presence of the Mutiny as a major theme in British nineteenth-century writings.

Herbert's book and my dissertation embarks from the same platform as far as we both investigate the question of singularity, or what made the Mutiny a watershed event and how can

[9] But of course, she says a novel on the Mutiny cannot be *written*. Interestingly she does not say whether it can be written in any form other than prose. It appears that she is suggesting that prose cannot adequately contain or describe the Mutiny. Poetry may be another story since it is almost always metaphorical and thus does not bear the burden of realism. This, Zizek suggests, is the way to re-read Adorno's statement! It is not poetry but prose which is impossible after Auschwitz! See, Zizek *Violence* 4-5.

we determine its trenchant hold on the colonial imaginary. Yet at the same time, I have serious reservations about the inferences drawn by Herbert in relation to the psycho-social impact of the event on Victorian collective consciousness. To begin with, the most important difference between Herbert's project and mine is at the level of the theoretical analysis pursued and cultural materials studied. My work is a psychoanalytical study of anxiety generated by the Mutiny within Anglo-Indian (and not only British) collective consciousness and as registered in a variety of writings by individuals in both Britain and India. Herbert's study by contrast focuses only on Victorian representations and is not informed by Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalytic theory. He refers to Freud; though the *only* Freudian text mentioned in his work is *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Herbert actually says that his theoretical position is "not psychoanalytic" – "The mode of cultural history by means of which I seek to trace [the] complex developments in Victorian Mutiny literature is not psychoanalytic, but it borrows from psychoanalysis, along with the concept of the imago, the fundamental concept of psychological trauma" (53). It is clear from Herbert's references and citations that he borrows more from the writings by Cathy Caruth than Freud (54). My objection to Herbert's work does not come from his specific *use* of trauma theory; in fact we both argue from our different theoretical positions, at least apparently, that the Mutiny causes a *breach* in collective consciousness and foment a crisis of identity. Trauma, as Caruth reads it, is indeed helpful in problematizing the question of history, especially the writing of history. For "trauma […] is aimed not at eliminating history but at resituating it in our understanding" (*Unclaimed Experience* 11). The problem of course is with this restitution – trauma is a signpost that informs that something is amiss from history, something is not right; some thing has passed into non-knowledge because of repression. The issue then is how to reinstate that which has been lost? And the corresponding problem is with representation of what

is reclaimed as lost through trauma. Herbert's work would have been fascinating if he were to pursue this particular direction. Instead, he *misreads* trauma as caused by knowledge and trauma as knowledge. The theoretical difference between us is simply this: while Herbert argues that it is knowledge of the events that is responsible for creating trauma and raising moral questions, I argue the reverse. I show that it is the unknowability and difficulty of knowing the Mutiny, of containing it through narrative, which provoke anxieties.

Herbert's work, broadly speaking, addresses what Freud identifies as 'moral anxiety' or the danger felt by the self in context of demands made by the Super-ego. That is, the problem of reconciling with the *two* faces of the Super-ego; one prohibiting the subject with an assortment of moral laws and the other demanding at the same time that the subject enjoy by transgressing these prohibitive stipulations. I focus instead on neurotic anxiety, which Freud defines in his 1926 essay 'Inhibitions, Symptom and Anxiety,' as signaling a breach in the ego (*SE*: 20).[10] In other words, anxiety is a signal of a breach that threatens to expose to the ego the truth about the fantastic nature of the Super-ego. The Super-ego or Law is at the core of the symbolic order, it constitutes the symbolic order by instituting difference between the self and the others and the self and the Other. A threat to the Super-ego is a threat to the entire symbolic order and imaginary identity positions assumed by the subject within it. Anxiety, therefore, is with the collapse of the symbolic order and the threat it constitutes for the imaginary of the self in process. This particular agency of anxiety, I show in my chapters, explains why the Mutiny was an encounter impossible to narrate. Unlike Herbert who argues that the Mutiny poses a problem to the British collective consciousness by exposing their physical and psychological involvement in acts of inhuman barbarity against the colonized, I contend that such considerations though

[10] For a general theory of anxiety see, Harari *Anxiety*, Laplanche & Pontalis, [eds.] *Psycho-analysis*, Laplanche 'A Metapsychology Put to the Test of Anxiety,' Salecl *On Anxiety*.

present are not critical agencies shaping the representations of the Mutiny. Instead, these representations reveal a primary anxiety about the impossibility of defining the encounter, the encounter as a threat to knowledge and meaning-making, and perform a secondary ideological function of suturing the breach opened up in the wake of the event by recuperating collapsed knowledge systems and identity positions. Let me elaborate.

The Concept of Anxiety

Representations of the Uprising are marked by visible and invisible anxieties, fears, and apprehensions over a wide range of issues. But a distinction must be made between the wide arrays of emotional reactions elicited by the event before the centrality of anxiety within these can be established. Obviously, the immediate cause of concern for any colonial regime facing a mutiny or civil rebellion is about the possible end of colonial hegemony. The 1857 Uprising, of course, threatened to end British rule in the subcontinent, but this fear alone does not explain the anxieties emerging out of the crisis. Anxieties about the Uprising were often not related to the fear of losing the Empire in India; or, for that matter, to any other tangible form of fear. In other words, anxieties about a mutiny are not the same as the fears that mutinies as extensive as 1857 often produce. Though fear and anxiety can be identified as resulting from the same event or cause, a distinction must be made between these two forms of emotive responses.

Following Freud's discussion on the difference between fear and anxiety in his essay 'Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety' (1926) and Lacan's seminar on Anxiety (1963), we can conclude that while fear involves an identifiable object, tangible or material concerns, the 'end of British rule' for example, anxiety as affect registers at a much more ontological level. For anxiety affects the ego by signaling limits circumscribing identity or the self. If identity or ego is first built around an imaginary belief in bodily unity, the body as perceived as a whole in the

mirror (as Lacan explains in his 'Mirror Stage [1949]' essay), then fear is directly related to bodily harm (75-81, 'Aggressive' 82-101). By contrast, psychoanalytic clinical experience suggests, anxiety arises from a threat to the knowledge (misrecognition) that constitutes the image of bodily unity – a threat to the knowledge of 'I see myself in the mirror as One, therefore I must be One' (a Cartesian derivative, of course). This knowledge sustains our misplaced belief in bodily unity as implying mastery and identity, thereby constituting the self or I. Anxiety threatens this self and the imaginary supports of this self, namely, knowledge, power, identity, and faith, by challenging these supports as irreversible, self-evident truths. For example, when a scratch on the surface of a mirror returns to us our bodily reflection as scratched, anxiety is produced as an effect of this reflection, though we are aware that no bodily scratch exists as such on our body or face.

Following this theoretical position, I contend that the 1857 Uprising apart from evoking fears about physical and material well-being amongst all parties involved also produced anxieties about identities by rupturing established imperial and indigene knowledge systems. Take for example the following as an illustration of how the Uprising affected British belief in and knowledge of their unparalleled authority over the 'inferior' native. In a letter written by John Lawrence, the governor of Punjab, only a few days after the Sepoys had mutinied at Meerut (10 May 1857) and occupied the fortified city of Delhi, the veteran administrator and highly decorated general affirms, "I served for nearly 13 years at Delhi and *know the people well*. My *belief* is that with good management on the part of the Civil Officers, it [Delhi] would open its gates on the approach of our troops. *It seems incredible to conceive that the Mutineers can hold and defend it*" (IOR/H 726) [emphasis mine]. But not only did Delhi not open her gates, Delhi did not fall until September of that year. The four month long siege cost the British lives of two

Commander-in-Chiefs and the (in)famous general Nicholson, over and above hundreds of men through action and attrition. The symbolic significance of retaking Delhi for preserving the superiority of the White-man's identity in the eyes of the natives is clear from letters written by another high-ranking official, Neville Chamberlain, to his mother. Written at the same time as Lawrence's, one of Chamberlain's letters claim, "Take Delhi and keep Peshawar quite and we are all right" (IOR/MSS EUR 203/1). However, in another letter, written on 1 September 1857, during the fourth month of the Delhi siege, he refrains, "I fear unless we can take Delhy [sic] soon, we shall get into a fix. Our very Punjabees [sic] will begin to doubt our ability to weather the storm" (ibid.). Chamberlain's fear about losing support of the Indian allies, the Punjabis, hides a graver anxiety – an anxiety that the natives, even those supporting them, would lose all faith in the much-vaunted claims of British military, racial, and tactical superiority. The same anxiety, I think we can speculate, had rattled Lawrence when he realized his knowledge of the people was hopelessly misfounded.

I have characterized the phenomenon of colonialism as a "forced metaphor" in my dissertation to explain how colonialism is structured around a void. A void that emerges as a result of the difference between colonialism as a material practice and discursive strategies employed to re-present colonialism as an enlightened dialectical struggle between the West and the East. In a situation, where driven by the ideological need for "representational totalization" the multiform plurality of the Other is signified through a single definitive term, those excluded, repressed, or foreclosed *return* at times of conflict and announce anxiety. Anxiety is an anxiety about the return of the *Thing*, which "although [a] part of the system" does not have a "proper place within it" (Zizek "On Badiou"). The sepoy, I argue in chapter one, is such a thing. Extracted from the impoverished and deeply religious peasantry and exposed in the course of

their service in a mercenary army to the morals and ethics of a new world, the sepoys could not go back to being a peasant nor could they ever aspire to be equal to their European officers. Caught in the doldrums of a "position without identity," they were tied to each other through affective ties of religion and to their European officers through slender ties of symbolic affiliation. When the mainstay of their fragile positional identity, that is religion, was suspected to be under threat, they had no qualms in severing their peripheral symbolic ties and announcing rebellion.

This brings me to a far more serious and ideological problem in Herbert's work.[11] Herbert claims that the trauma experienced by Victorians on knowing about British counter-insurgency actions during the Mutiny is responsible for the repeated and exaggerated attempts at demonstrating rebel villainy in mutiny fictions. The rebels were portrayed as absolute evil in order to justify British 'retributive' actions, he says. Representations of rebel wickedness, for Herbert, are not heart-felt opinions about the colonized. Rather, these are symptoms of British difficulty to accept and condone acts of injustices perpetrated by their own fellow citizens. As symptoms these representations seek to overwrite the trauma (read, moral dilemma) felt by Victorian writers in having to acknowledge barbaric acts perpetrated by their own kin. Herbert draws attention to 'other' voices, like those in Russell's diary criticizing the racist attitude of British soldiers, to argue that far from what postcolonial criticism has insinuated over the years

[11] I don't even want to address Herbert's claim that the Mutiny did not have any geo-political impact on the imperial imaginary. I have briefly mentioned how the mutiny morphed into 'other' rebellions above and have discussed the geo-political implications of the Mutiny in mid- and late-Victorian imaginary in my chapters 2 & 3 & 5. If only Herbert had taken the trouble of reading Indian historians and then re-reading British histories he would have seen a more than tangible impact of the Mutiny on imperial geo-politics. Also, official documents in the India Office, British Library, bear witness to the geo-political importance of the event on British imperial imaginary. See, for example, IOR H/814 459-75. Documents in this file contain intelligence reports about not only a threat of Russian invasion but possible mutinies incited by foreign powers. These documents date from late 1860s and 1870s.

have, Victorian England was not racist![12] Victorians had enough sympathy and understanding to condone, or failing to do so metaphorically represent dilemmas about their own moral qualms about colonial misadventures, says Herbert.

Sadly, this train of thinking suffers from an obliging presumption about the acumen of Victorian liberal thinking. Better still, it grants to Victorian intellectuals a common and/or shared consciousness – they all felt the same way about the Mutiny. I show instead that Victorian reaction to the Mutiny was, at best, split – not between being racist and 'liberal,' but between being overtly racist and being so without knowing. Victorian England was split between being imperialist and being imperialist without knowing. Indictments of British conduct during the Uprising – censure of sickening execution of natives as noted in Russell's diary to give Herbert's example – exceptional as they are, should not be evaluated outside the parameters of imperial ideology. In the wake of the growing consolidation of society and intellectual positions within it as liberal and modern, the importance of dialogue as a civilized mode for resolving all conflicts and issues, including colonial issues, started to gain favor at or during this time. Dialogue and not war was to be the new order for all democratic societies. Within this kind of a cultural order, self-reproachment as discourse is variously connected to ideologies of self-assertion and national identity as exclusive. Deeply implicated in the dialectical mechanism of liberal hegemony, self-consciousness of the kind that Herbert talks about seeks to re-present self-criticism as a sign of heightened self-awareness. The self thereby portrayed is a continually reforming and evolving modern self. Liberal democracy is established as the best, if not the only system, that allows such

[12] Herbert is harshly critical of postcolonial studies for what he calls its "doctrinaire straight-jacket" readings of Victorian literature and culture. In particular, he criticizes Chakravarty's book for ignoring voices within Victorian society that were critical of British actions in the colony. He charges Chakravarty for these exclusions and "incomprehensible" misrepresentations. As Elaine Freedgood says, Herbert's book is only partly about the 1857 Mutiny, for it "seems to want to address another 'mutiny': that of postcolonial critics against Victorian culture." See Freedgood 'Anti-post' 551.

an untrammeled development of the self. Both the representation of the self and the move towards liberal democracy, as we see in post-Mutiny British society, only consolidates pre-existing ideas about the West as possessed of self-consciousness and Western society as dynamic. Everything else (other societies, other cultures, other people), either fails to achieve this state of self-hood or lacks the necessary conditions for aspiring to such a subjective and political state.[13] Gestures like self-criticism or condemnation of British miscreancy do not exonerate British mutiny fiction from the culpability of being ideologically complicit with a monolithic imperialist and racist mentality that uncritically celebrated British colonization through uniform vilification of the rebellion and natives. These 'dissents' are only there for relief; for reclaiming the imaginary of modernity!

A discussion of anxiety enriches any discussion on or debate about trauma, and complicates possibilities and/or impossibilities of (re)claiming experience. I cannot enter into another long theoretical digression to explain the relationship between anxiety and trauma, but it might be adequate for the time being to point out a couple of differences between the two.[14] In trauma, an object-cause, real or imaginary, is present. Anxiety by contrast is marked by the absence of an object in reality; that is, what is identified as anxiety provoking or something that is identified as anxiety provoking is never the 'real' object of anxiety. Anxiety, though sharing a connection with external events has more to do with something internal. It is, as I show in the

[13] I have argued elsewhere how the so-called liberal democracies of today actually originated out of colonial and imperial states, and how these systems continue to perpetuate the hegemony of the West on the rest of the World. My arguments are not much different from Slavoj Zizek's work on the subject of liberal democracy and ethics, except I introduce the question of colonialism into this field. See any work on Zizek like *Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?* My paper is titled, 'In Support of Jihad? The Immoral Ethics of Indian Rebellion of 1857' [work in progress]. Even today, what is highlighted over and over again in context of the election issue in Iran, to give an example, is that because they *now* have access to internet, facebook, twitter and mobile phones they *now* have a voice! As if Iranians never had a voice when they did not have access to internet! It is these 'magnificent' discoveries of the West that have given them voice.

[14] For an interesting reading of trauma from the Lacanian perspective, see, Ragland, 'The Psychical Nature of Trauma.'

conclusion of my dissertation, structural; anxiety is present as an essential part of the symbolic order and/or language and the subject constituted by language. Second, unlike trauma, anxiety is the "nodal point" of Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalytic theories, thus accommodative of and useful for pursuing rigorous analytical inquiry of events, situations, and subjectivities. Finally, and as a logical corollary to the second point, anxiety resituates important questions about sexuality and temporality more thoroughly within the domain of analysis – clinical or cultural – by opening up the topological knotting of the real, symbolic, and imaginary orders vis-à-vis the Signifier, and the subject as an effect of that Signifier. In other words, trauma is either symbolic or imaginary since it does not exist outside the structure of retroactive signification – trauma is always a narrative while anxiety, and here lies the cause of all anxiety, can never be narrated![15]

I however agree with Herbert on two things. First, truly, no society can be understood as fixed. Society like any organization is structured around conflict of voices and opinions, each colliding with and contradicting the other. Within this paradigmatic structure, policies and actions of the state are almost always open to criticism (i.e., depending on the character of the State, participation of civil society and dialogue is acceptable at varying degrees). We see that today in context of the Iraq war and we witness such conflict of opinions during the Mutiny as well. Doctrinaire readings stressing imperial jingoism as the only form of discourse to emerge out of Victorian consciousness is false and misleading. But it is equally impossible to credit these alternative voices of dissent (then and now) as anything more than performative; these function only within stipulated allowances of the liberal structure and as endorsed, even desperately

[15] My theoretical understanding of anxiety in this dissertation is based on Freud's writings and Lacan's re-reading of these. In Freud, discussions of anxiety are so spread out that it is difficult to strictly identify one text. The 1926 text is obviously one of the more important ones. Lacan devoted a whole year, 1962-63, for presenting a seminar on anxiety. See, Lacan, *Seminaire X, L'Angoisse*. I use here the 'unofficial' translation of this Seminar by Cormac Gallagher. Citations from the translation follow the usual practice of giving dates of individual sessions instead of page numbers. Also, Miller 'Introduction to Reading Jacques Lacan's Seminar on Anxiety,' parts I & II. Other essays and articles are referred in my individual chapters.

solicited, by a liberal state to sustain the façade of modernity. In effect, dissent against state policies merely complements the imaginary of liberal modernity by highlighting in effect the 'western' enlightenment ethos which builds the moral-ethical premise of liberal modernity; the West and the subject of the west as marked by rationality, debate, self-criticism, and progress. Second, I accept the charge that *many* postcolonial works have indeed fallen prey to colonizing tendencies in their outright determination of Victorian England as imperialist, racist, or xenophobic. This erasure of depth or portraiture of the West as lacking interiority is problematic. We need to wake up to the fact that both the colonizer and the colonized, the men on the field so to say, were victims of a system that was beyond them and functioned in spite of them. Throughout my work I remain sensitive to this fact and attempt to point out this sad but natural quandary of colonialism.

Scripting Anxiety undertakes a much required but long overdue analysis of the affective dimension of the Indian Mutiny through an investigation of cultural consciousness and discourses engendered by that consciousness. The dissertation does not describe a single conceptualization of anxiety running through all the various discourses but illustrates the diverse contexts and ideological platforms on which British, Indian, and rebel-subaltern anxieties about the Uprising are situated. It also unravels the function and agency of anxiety in these different discourses in context of the colonial situation in order to explicate how anxieties inflect divergent understandings and representations of the event. I contend against colonial as well as postcolonial attempts at proposing axiomatic principles for reading the Mutiny, such as it was a war of religion or the rebels lacked historical consciousness or that it was a war of national liberation.[16] The Mutiny is 'singular' precisely because of the challenge it poses to our systems

[16] The idea that the Indian Mutiny was in actuality a war of religion, of Islamic fundamentalism and Hindu bigotry against progressive ideals of a civilized Europe, is a notion as old as the first shot fired by the rebels. British

of knowledge and identity by refusing to be subsumed thoroughly and accurately within any definitive narrative. It is not for nothing that it has remained as abstract as a 'Breath on the face of the waters' or has posed difficulties for conceptualizing and describing it holistically through imagination. The novel on the Mutiny has not been written because it cannot be written!

Narrating the Event

The dissertation is divided into two sections – British and Indian – with 3 chapters in each section respectively. These chapters focus on the affective constructions of the Mutiny as an event in cultural representations and social discourses through interconnected threads such as specific anxieties about the Other, causes for and the peculiar role of material objects in these anxieties, the loss of imaginary identities as a result of anxieties, and, the interesting modalities adapted by the British and Indian writers for recuperating identities. The multiform presence of anxieties about objects, identity, and sexuality in British, Indian, and rebel-subaltern writings show the Mutiny as revealing a primary anxiety about the impossibility of defining the encounter, the encounter as a threat to knowledge and meaning making, and as performing a secondary ideological function of suturing the breach opened up by the event through recuperations of collapsed knowledge systems and identity positions.

The first 3 chapters of the British section explore three anxious situations. The first chapter, 'Objects of Empire, Things of Panic: Indian Mutiny, Anxiety, & Victorian Imagination,' studies the affective impact of the Uprising on imperial knowledge systems through an interrogation of Victorian material culture. I investigate how the breakdown of colonial

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historians like Charles Ball and others popularized the idea (of course there were others who differed). The hold of this idea persists more strongly today, especially after 9/11 and 'global war on terrorism.' Recent histories like William Dalrymple's *The Last Mughal* make a direct connection between the rebels and rebel ideology of 1857 and terrorist groups like Al-Qaeda. The idea of the rebels lacking any historical consciousness is however something that is found in both British and Indian, including some postcolonial Indian, writings. (Again differing voices were and are present).

administrative and knowledge systems due to unsupervised circulation of dangerous object-things are represented in John Kaye's *A History of the Sepoy War in India* (1865) and how this concern with unknown indigenous object-things are re-presented in displaced fictional narratives such as Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of the Four* (1890). The dramatic transformation of known objects – objects which have been variously researched, classified, known, and represented after a thorough study of the Other's culture and character – into dangerous things, via undocumented and unanticipated use of these objects by the natives, metaphorically represents anxiety over the failure to know and control the indigenous space. In the fictional writings, most interestingly, this anxiety occasions a drama around collapse of and eventual reconstitution of imperial identity. My intention in studying Victorian anxieties about objects from the perspective of the 1857 Uprising is to highlight at the very outset of my dissertation the relation between anxiety and knowledge, and by extension imperial identity.

Chapter two, 'Scandals of the State: Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* and the Historical Contexts of 1857,' presents a detailed critical analysis of Collins's novel. The anxiety over the Mutiny as an emasculating force deconstructing established power positions and disruptive of hegemonic social structures is displaced onto the history of the moonstone and the invasion of the Brahmins. As a displaced representation of the Mutiny, Collins's novel veils an anxiety about the disintegration of imperial identity, and, reconstitutes this threatened imperial identity subsequently through the character of the "eminent Indian scholar" Mr. Murthwaite. The novel, when read from the vantage point of psychoanalytic theory to stress the differences between imaginary concerns and more symbolic issues offers the opportunity for excavating questions about maintaining national and imperial security as it lies in tension with a deeper psychological

anxiety over the collapse of 'western' Enlightenment identity. The ideological script of the novel, I show, is split between acknowledging the brutality of British actions in the colony and revising through the character of Murthwaite an innovative vision of and discourse for colonial surveillance. At the heart of the latter is, of course, a desire to distance earlier instances of colonial misgovernment and a fantasy of 'New' Men fit for mediating the complexities involved in governing the colonial space.

I continue discussing the imperial desire for and anxiety over (new) masculinity in my third chapter 'Menacing Desire: Sexuality, Zenana, and the Rebellious 'Rane' in Colonial Mutiny Fiction.' I argue that the late- Victorian interest in imagining the Mutiny through the character of the Rani of Jhansi, Lakshmi Bai – at least 5 novels on the Rani were published between 1887 and 1901 – is marked by a number of social, ideological, and psychological factors. Most important of these, I show, is an anxiety over queer and transgressive sexualities and the Mutiny as disruptive of established gender identities. Following Jenny Sharpe and Nancy Paxton's discussion of how late Victorian fiction constructed gender stereotypes by consecrating specific models of masculinity and feminity to meet the ideological demands of the New Imperialism, I contend, that in John Maclean *Rane: A Legend of the Mutiny* (1887) and Hume Nisbet's *The Queen's Desire* (1893), the body of the Rani becomes a site for examining dangers that emerge when established gender forms and behaviors are challenged. The Rani's active participation in the Mutiny subverts existing ideas about colonized women as helpless and trapped in the *zenana*, thus making difficult the task of conclusively classifying the Rani as either man or woman. In the novels, the Rani emerges as a problematic masculine woman-thing. The presence of a meta-narrative in the novels regarding the ambivalence and hybridity of the Rani's sexual identity is significant for my discussion on the relation between anxiety and the

dismantling of the colonial symbolic order. In this chapter, I theorize that anxiety over the collapse of the symbolic order from belligerent insurrection shares the same experiential and psychological register with the anxiety over the collapse of established gender binaries, as both involve a disappearance of difference.

The British chapters elaborate my argument about the Mutiny as disruptive of established knowledge systems and productive of anxieties about imperial identity. Material objects such as the lotah, the moonstone, and metaphorical objects like the Rani as an *other* woman represent the greater anxiety about the Mutiny. Suturing of this anxiety, I show, is achieved either through fantastic characters like Murthwaite or by murdering of the anxiety provoking object-thing. Identity, masculinity, and knowledge are recuperated in the process.

The anxious ideological situation of the Uprising within Indian bourgeois consciousness is equally, if not more, complex. The scripting of identities more nuanced; mediated by precarious situation of the colonized bourgeois in the colonial state. As Partha Chatterjee shows, national bourgeois discourses while borrowing from dominant imperial discourses carefully crafted them to fit their social and ideological position (*Nationalist Thought*). Discussions and representations of the Mutiny do not appear before the 1870s in bourgeois writings, coinciding with the emergence of nationalism in Bengal. During the post-Mutiny decade of the 60s, very few references to the event in any form of writing can be found; and when found these are frequently loyalist, condemning the rebellion as regressive. This, and the presence of comparatively fewer number of mutiny novels written by Indians during the nineteenth century, as opposed to the hundred-odd works of mutiny fiction published in England between 1857 and 1900, has precipitated the view that the native bourgeois was unaffected by the events of 1857.

My fourth chapter offers a corrective to this widely held idea alongside a detailed examination of the specific anxieties and ideological scripting of identity by the national bourgeois in their writings about the Mutiny. 'Retrieving Lost Selves: Mutiny, Nationalism, & Anxiety in Bengali Literature and Consciousness' draws attention to a small but significant body of Bengali writings on the Uprising, published between 1857 and 1900 by scions of the colonial middle-class in India. Through close readings of novels like Soshee Dutt's English language mutiny fiction, *Shunkur* (1877), Upendra Mitra's *Nana Sahib* (1879) and Girish Ghosh's *Chandra* (1884) [both in Bengali], I argue that the Mutiny in nationalist writings is a site for reclaiming history – the episode is meticulously judged from perspective of the fledgling bourgeois tendencies and bourgeois morals are inserted into the historical space of the Uprising through insertion of middle-class heroes like Somnath in Ghosh's *Chandra*. Using Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's nationalist epic *Anandamath* (1882) and its story of *Sanyasi* rebellion as an example of a displaced memorialization of the Indian Mutiny, I show how nationalist thought uses the memory of the Uprising for nationalist reconstructions of subjectivity and colonial modernity. The bourgeois claimed for themselves the role of the progressive nationalist avant-garde against the bigoted rebel-subaltern and dissipate national feudatory. The representations of the Uprising in nationalist writings, I show, served to consolidate the national imaginary and bourgeois identity within it in opposition to both the colonizer and domestic Others, including the uneducated peasants, 'fundamentalist' Muslims, 1857 rebels, and women.

The fifth chapter, 'Unequal Partners: Rabindranath Tagore, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, and the Mutiny of Fifty-Seven,' asserts that both British and Indian bourgeois nationalists narratives are ideologically complicit in representing the Uprising as a religious war. The chapter extends the arguments of the previous chapter to study the evolution of bourgeois nationalist

thought about the Mutiny in the first decade of the twentieth century. Through readings of Rabindranath Tagore's writings on the Uprising and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's quasi-historical polemical narrative *The Indian War of Independence-1857* (1909), I show how both writers, in spite of their ideologically different positions in relation to the colonial regime and each other, subscribe to the most axiomatic imperial representation of the Mutiny as a religious war.

My final chapter 'In the *Deen* of the Mutiny: The 1857 Insurrection, Jihad, and the Question of Subaltern Consciousness' probes the classification of the Mutiny as a regressive war of religions by considering subaltern representations of the event. Rebel proclamations, especially the little-studied "Royal Army Proclamation" and the so-called *jihadi* pamphlets, documents often cited by British historians to claim the Uprising as a religious conflict, I show are much more complex than a simple call to murder for the sake of religious purity. Emphasizing the complexity assumed by religion and religious practices within the subcontinent, I illustrate the fallacy of trying to understand and classify Indian religions and religion inspired movements like the Mutiny through broad axiomatic principles. I show that the rebel pamphlets demonstrate anxiety over the threat posed by the interference of colonial rule to the ductile societal condition of India. This final chapter points out the problem of representing the Uprising as a religious war or *jihad* in both imperial and national bourgeois accounts.

The appendix, 'Reading Bhabha, Reading Lacan: Towards a Theory of Colonial Anxiety,' attempts to offer a general working theory of colonial anxiety. It argues that the colonial venture is productive of and structurally conditioned by inescapable anxious situations. In attempting to theorize a structural relationship between colonialism as a material cultural phenomenon and anxiety as an affective state inherent to that phenomenon, I return to Homi

Bhabha. As with the passages from Edward Said's *Orienatlism*, which I refer in my first chapter to illustrate how the practice of 'forced metaphorization' of the Other within colonialism is fundamentally responsible for generating anxiety, passages that have sadly been overlooked or if noticed have not elicited much substantive argument for resituating the question of affect in discussions on colonial discourse, I believe Bhabha's attempted theorizations have also remained unnoticed by scholars.[17] My appendix tries to read Bhabha with Lacan and offer a definition of 'colonial anxiety' and its centrality within colonial experiential space.

Unlike scholars, who read colonialism, (or other forms of hegemonic socio-economic conditions), only in terms of an unequal power struggle between the dominant and dominated, and the various ideological constructs implemented, adapted, derived, and executed, first, by the colonial state, and, then, the postcolonial nation, as flowing from that basic inequality, I read the above conditions by focusing on the circulation of affect within the colonial space/relations. Simply put, I hypothesize that colonizer-colonized identity is produced not only through a

[17] The passages from Said that I have in mind are in his 'Introduction.' One of these passage or ideas that I draw upon in my formulation of 'forced metaphor,' is between pages 5 and 6. Here Said sets out a series of "qualifications" regarding Orientalism. Consider the following: "My point is that Disraeli's statement about the East refers mainly to that *created consistency*, that regular constellation of ideas as the pre-eminent thing about the Orient, and not to its mere being […] ideas, cultures, and histories cannot be seriously understood or studied without their *force*, or more precisely their configurations of power, also being studied" [emphasis mine]. This "force' he clarifies shortly after is not simply something that breaks down at the mere assertion of the truth. Why? Because, Orientalism is more than a discourse, it is a "sign" (6), and as such, like all signs as Saussure tells us, built upon an arbitrary but stringent condensation of the signifier as singular; metaphorization protected by the bar that separates the signifier from the signified. Lacan would of course go onto revise the famous Saussurian formulation of S/s to s/S, Signifier over the Signified, while also suggesting that the metonymic flow of the chain of signifiers below the bar is a disruptive threat to the Signifier. See, Lacan 'The Instance of the Letter' and Seminar V, for example. Consider the points made by Saussure and Lacan in relation to what Said has to say about how the Orient is formed. The Orient emerges "not simply [as an] empirical reality" that can be shaped, exploited, and controlled, but also as a space arranged, governed, and articulated through "battery of desires, repressions, investments, and projections" (8). These articulations that aid governance through "repression, investments, and projections" contain the necessary conditions for the production of anxiety, since what is repressed always returns! Also, note Said's point about who or what articulates the Other – "a sovereign Western consciousness" enjoying "unchallenged centrality" (8). To such a sovereign consciousness the plural, ductile, socio-cultural world of the subcontinent and the restricted political sovereignty of the Mughals, a sovereignty dotted with local political absolutisms, cannot and did not make any sense. No wonder the greatest crisis for the administration was not political but cultural. Case in point: Philip Meadows Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug* (1839), where beneath the political concern with law and order flows a much more unnerving concern – how come Hindus and Muslims are working together as brothers in a cult that pays reverence to the Hindu Goddess Kali! For a longer and detailed discussion of Said's passages see my chapter 1.

dialectics of domination, power, and struggle, but these determining vectors are continuously re-shaped by anxiety, articulating the impossibility of constructing determinant identities – derived, adapted, forced, or domesticated. In other words, the colonial vision, whether prescribed by a right of conquest or the right to civilize/reform, and all complementary ideological systems and discursive fields supporting that vision, are burdened by an unconscious anxiety over the fragility and/or ambiguity of the self and its claims. The 1857 Uprising articulates, forcefully, this agency of anxiety as structuring the colonizer-colonized, self-Other, and subject-object relations within colonialism.

CHAPTER I

Objects of Empire, Things of Panic: Indian Mutiny, Anxiety, & Victorian Imagination.

"Persons and Things do turn up so vexatiously in this life, and will in a manner insist on being noticed. Let us take it easy, and let us take it short; we shall be in the thick of the mystery soon, I promise."

[Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* 34].

"I feel perfectly convinced that up to the present time the real cause of the Mutiny, and the feeling of the country generally against the British rule, is not well known to the State."

[Shaikh Hedayut Ali, 30 January1858].

"The Fakeers appearance […] and his great intimacy with sepoys, are certainly suspicious facts; but every endeavour to trace out his History, the object of his journeyings, and his ultimate fate, have failed […]."

[Major Williams, Commissioner of the Military Police, N.W. Provinces].

I

Debating the manifold causes of the Indian Mutiny, John Holloway, who lost his family to the "cowardly treachery and fiendish cruelty" of the mutineers, writes, "[a]ny attempt, having for its object the solution of causes which led to the recent outbreak in our Indian Empire, must be attended by a *more than ordinary* carefulness of research; for they appear not on the surface, but must be sought for in the depths" (*Essays* ix; 1-2) [emphasis mine].[18] Throughout Holloway's narrative, one finds an interesting tension between his stated project – to carefully research, investigate, and offer solutions to the "complete mystery" of the Mutiny – and his inability to establish in any acute detail descriptions of and causes for the event (ix). In spite of claiming first-hand experience of the land and its people, experiences which supposedly "enable[d]" his "ideas" respecting the Mutiny, not a single idea regarding the rebellion appears stable in the narrative (x). Descriptions of the colonial space and the rebellious natives drift from one unstable signifier to another, from *chapattis* to Nana Sahib to the "the beautiful flowers of this country [which] temptingly invite the hand to pluck and inhale their sweet perfume, but which often conceal beneath their leaves the deadly cobra, the most venomous of known snakes

[18] In the wake of the Mutiny, popular, intellectual, and political debates on how to reestablish effective administrative control over the colony assumed two distinct forms. One called for rigorous enactments of martial laws and construction of a military-barrack state, while the other opposed this suggesting pursual of a more reconciliatory approach. Those is support of stringent measures identified the Mutiny as a product of administrative weakness; a lack on the part of the East India Company to forcefully implement laws and regulations. Those voicing a more liberal take divined that it was precisely because of the autocratic actions and stringent administrative policies of the Company that the rebellion occurred. Either way the Company was made the scapegoat. Following the Mutiny, it was gradually realized that neither causes nor responsibilities for the outbreak were easy to declare; more searching was necessary. Mutiny narratives and colonial adventure fictions found in this continuing debate inspiration for constructing most innovative ways of re-imaging colonial control. The implicit need for *extraordinary* control and surveillance of the colony, which was being explicitly stated by some like Holloway, contributed in creating the character of the European spy or agent who can hybridize himself physically as well as culturally, thereby successfully infiltrating the Other space. The best example of this type of character is of course Kipling's Kim. But Gautam Chakravarty has shown that *Kim* needs to be situated in relation to the tradition of mutiny and colonial adventure fictions, where heroes perform similar cross-cultural hybridized acts of espionage. See, Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny*, espc., chapters 5 and 6. In chapter 2 below, I discuss this in detail by focusing attention on the character of Mr. Murthwaite in Wilkie Collins's 1868 novel *The Moonstone*. I briefly touch upon the issue later in this chapter in my section on Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.

[…]" (79). Aware of this problem from the very beginning, Holloway cautions his readers early on about the impossibility of exacting Reason in the colony; here a razor cut can be "accounted of the mosquitoes" and vice-versa (20; 27). Indeed, as Gautam Chakravarty contends, the binary structure of order-disorder that Ranajit Guha identifies as the singular structural system governing representations in counter-insurgency prose often do not fit British mutiny narratives, especially first person accounts. In Holloway's narrative, too, we view the same problem at play. Though an overarching idiom of order-disorder circumscribes his account, disorder in Holloway is not simply a product of insurgency; it is rather an essential or natural condition of the colonial space (See, Guha, 'Prose of Counter-Insurgency' 1-42; Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny* 128).

The anxiety over the ambivalence and lurking dangers of the colonial space is nothing new in imperial discourse. But post-mutiny reimaginings often have material objects at the center of such anxieties. These objects change shape or transform from being harmless to dangerous in matter of minutes, throwing narratives into panic and articulating concern over the inability to apprehend these objects through knowledge or otherwise. Elaine Freedgood in her recent book, *The Ideas in Things*, shows that the pervasive concern with material objects in mid- and late-Victorian cultures is a phenomenon that is closely bound to and a product of emergent structures of capitalism. Anxieties about objects in Victorian literature, Freedgood suggests, must be read as symptoms articulating the general public's awareness about and discomfort with imperial modes of production as instated in the colonies.[19] Objects in Victorian fiction are often,

[19] For a slightly different but very interesting discussion on material objects, anxieties, and capitalism, see Declercq. In his essay 'Lacan on the Capitalist Discourse: Its Consequences for Libidinal Enjoyment and Social Bonds,' Declercq reads subject-object relations within capitalism from the perspective of Lacanian theory. He writes that though capitalism appears to encourage a culture of deriving enjoyment from objects, where objects offer enjoyment or jouissance, such a cultural condition is not advantageous for the neurotic/normative subject. Given that unbridled enjoyment compromises subject-subject relations by dislocating social bonds and confining subjects within secluded zones of enjoyment, the impetus of capitalism towards privileging subject-object relations are self-defeating; it risks the eventual collapse of the social fabric and possibility of exchange. Capitalism, according to Declercq, negotiates this danger of social implosion, first, by diluting enjoyment offered by objects, and second, as a complementary

consequently, fetishistic – the Mahogany furniture or Madeira wine in *Jane Eyre* are encoded with ideas otherwise not openly entertained in public – since readers of Bronte's novel are aware about how these objects have been procured. I agree with Freedgood's general argument but want to propose here another possible way for reading Victorian anxieties over material objects and their fictional representations by centering on the 1857 Uprising. Object anxieties, I will argue, are symptomatic and tangible manifestations of the disruption caused by the uprising in the functional sign-system of the colonial regime. The event, I will show, drove Victorian imagination and object-discourse as a *haunting*; flowing under the varied significative processes and ruptured representational chains.

Anxieties about material objects in mutiny narratives and general Victorian fictions share two common ideological objectives: a desire to establish effective control over the Other, that is to say reconsolidated shattered sign-systems, and a desire to manage uncertainties provoked by the unregulated circulation of unknown objects, i.e., dangerous *things*. In what follows, I first show that object anxieties which surface in context of the 1857 rebellion enunciate concern over disruptions of functional sign-systems, and, then, traverse this specific phenomenon to arrive at a broader theoretical explanation of the impact of the event on British cultural consciousness and collective memory. I will first explore discursive and non-discursive representational practices that show material objects as anxiety provoking, thereby revealing the relationship between object anxiety and the Mutiny. And thereafter, following Freedgood's discussion of object-anxieties and social psychology of Victorian Britain, I will amplify how in displaced fictional

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after-effect, by promoting a "regime that revolves around a lack of libidinal enjoyment" (Declercq 79, 81). For the neurotic/normative subject governed by desire and fantasy, as Lacan contends, the possibility of jouissance is an awkward proposition, since jouissance erases desire. The logic of capitalism, interestingly, pivots around a parallel presence of desire and a lack of satisfaction – the subject must desire an object, but remain unsatisfied with it so that he can consume more and more. Declercq's reading explains the threat constituted by the sudden intrusion of jouissance within capitalist culture.

representations of the Mutiny exotic objects arrange a theatrics of imperial crisis and intervention for disciplining perilous things. Before moving on however it is important to briefly acquaint my readers with the theory of objects and things as I use in this chapter.

Objects, Things, and the 1857 Uprising

My readings of objects, things, and the symptomatic relationship between object anxieties and the Mutiny are derived from three distinct theoretical models – Thing theory, Lacan's writings on Freudian *das ding*, and Gayatri Spivak's argument that subaltern insurrections signal a change/disruption in the established elitist sign-systems.[20] In this section I will briefly discuss the theory of difference that I derive from Thing theory and Lacanian psychoanalysis leaving the relational argument to emerge for itself in the course of the chapter.

To return therefore, how do we differentiate between objects and things? Bill Brown in his introduction to the edited collection of essays titled *Things* writes that things designate the "concrete yet ambiguous within the everyday." Thingness, in relation to objects, "amounts to a latency (the not yet formed or the not yet formable) and to an excess (what remains physically or metaphysically irreducible to objects)." In other words, things exist "beyond the grid of intelligibility […] outside the order of objects" (Brown *Things* 4-5). There are two critical points in Brown's argument that must be kept in mind. First, in contrast to Heidegger's contention that a thing is the "annihilated" other of the object, Brown asserts that a thing is not outside the realm of the ordinary (Heidegger 'Thing' 168). Rather, a thing remains "within the everyday" as an "irreducible" excess but without any distinct "phenomenal form." And, second, things function to "index a certain limit or liminality" to "both mark and manage uncertainty" in our cognitive mapping and experience of the world around us (Brown *Things* 5-6). Hence phenomenologically

[20] See, for example Latour "Matters" and Brown *Things*; Lacan *Ethics*; Spivak 'Subaltern Studies'.

things are experienced only at the level of *sudden* encounters – "you cut your finger on a sheet of paper; your trip over some toy; you get bopped on the head by a falling nut" (ibid. 4).

Brown's definition of the thing's outside-yet-inside character is strongly reminiscent of what Lacan terms the Real; or, that which resists symbolization while remaining as the irreducible core of the symbolic. In fact, Brown himself makes this connection when he writes: The thing is the "most compelling name for that enigma that can only be encircled and which the object (by its presence) necessarily negates." The thing "is and it isn't," notes Brown (ibid. 6). Yet the presence in absence of the thing corresponds more closely to what is designated as the symbolic in Lacan: the thing's constructive and deconstructive agency can be mapped and experienced at a structural or symbolic level, i.e. in an immediate experiential level. The sudden encounter with the thing itself becomes the (meta)physical experiential arena that can symbolize thingness in contrast to a docile object. There is, as Peter Schwenger notes, a difference between the thing about which Brown talks and the Thing in Lacan (Schwenger 'Words' 147). It is therefore crucial that we make a succinct characterization of the thing qua the object on basis of the well known Lacanian triad of the Imaginary, Symbolic, and the Real.

The Thing as the Real in Lacan is unrepresentable at a phenomenal or experiential level except as affect. Whereas things that appear in our imaginary-symbolic matrices as the underside of objects – an innocuous sheet of paper that can turn lethal, cut and draw blood – function to arrest, rupture, and disarray cognitive identifications at a phenomenological level. In other words, the thing as critical to the vivification of the object, that is, our identification of and with these objects, is symbolic; whereas the affect produced in the wake of the thing's intrusive impact on our cognitive orders is significative of the Real.

Following Lacan and Thing theory, what I call the *Thing* in specific context of my argument is therefore the anxiety produced by the unarticulated or incoherent impossible memory of the event (1857); the banal object turned dangerous thing as representative of the tension that Dipesh Chakrabarty identifies as existing between metonymic representations and stable memorizations of the Mutiny in Anglo-Indian narrative consciousness.[21]

In what follows, I begin by looking at how transformation of known colonial objects into dangerous things produce anxiety within mutiny narratives like John Kaye's *A History of the Sepoy War in India* (1865). Anxiety over material objects, I will show, signals a general collapse of established knowledge systems; the conversion of known objects into unknown things ruptures the colonial power structure built upon specific knowledge about the colony. I will then attempt to extrapolate from these accounts a hypothetical argument regarding continuities between specific (i.e., 1857) representations of anxiety over material objects and those in other Victorian narratives. My discussion of Victorian fiction will emphasize the peculiar movements towards suture present in Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868) and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Sign of the Four* (1890) as attempts at overwriting and/or containment of disruptive objects challenging imperial rational subjectivity. Moving from historical narratives to fictional texts, as well as from the immediate period of the Uprising to the late 1860's with Collins and the 1890s with Doyle, I shall illustrate the passage and *translation* (in the Derridean sense) of the particular concern with the Mutiny as metaphorized through anxieties about material objects.

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[21] In a recent article on the Mutiny in the *Economic and Political Weekly*, Chakrabarty posits that "insofar as 1857 is concerned, all we have, […] is the politics of memorialising and memorising the event, that is to say, the politics, indeed, of representation, of metaphorical and metonymic use of the composite name '1857'" (49). He explains memorializing or the metaphorical function as "creat[ing] out of a set of events a second or higher-order representation […] to attempt to make the events of 1857 […] represent something beyond their immediacy" (50-51), that is, to construct through them a meta-narrative not only of the events but also the history of British imperial rule in the sub-continent. Memorization or the metonymic use of 1857 in contrast, according to Chakrabarty, is characterized by a recalling or remembering of the emotive elements, like panic and fear, produced by the event and a corresponding appraisal of the Uprising as a "precursor of many other rebellions to come." See, Chakrabarty 'Remembering 1857' 45-55.

II

Objects of Empire & Things of Panic

Anxieties in British mutiny narratives over material objects transforming into dangerous things serve two important functions. First, they occasion a discursive site for reclaiming authority by domesticating and confining transgression, where itinerant and violent things metaphorically represent general anxieties about the rebellion. Second, they facilitate discourses of alterity. That is to say, the drama surrounding the representations of objects transforming into things and their eventual domestication, metonymically defines the Other as different from the self. One can argue that in doing so anxiety performs a restitutive and/or constitutive function. In other words, concern over objects occasions possible recuperation of what anxiety signals at – the collapse of established orders of law, meaning, and self; that is, functional sign-systems. Anxiety organizes a *movement* out of epistemic and ontological uncertainty. My arguments and analysis of anxiety about material objects, however, will drive eventually at differentiating the two – anxiety that is symbolic and anxiety that is real. (This will be helpful in discussing the relation between anxiety and the Uprising as we go on). To explain briefly, symbolic anxiety functions symbolically, i.e., ideologically, to (re)situate certainty, knowledge, self, whereas anxiety as real is anxiety-provoking because it disrupts, remains extrinsic to, and is independent of the symbolization process.[22]

The Lotah & the Brooding Sepoy

The most famous and notorious example of an anxiety-provoking object from the Mutiny is that of the greased cartridge. According to most imperial accounts, sepoy dissatisfaction with the introduction of new, greased cartridges was the main cause for the uprising. It is around the

[22] I am following the theoretical distinction made by Jacques-Alain Miller following Lacan between anxieties as "constituted" and "constituent," but I will not enter into a theoretical explanation of this distinction just now.

new Enfield rifle cartridges, which the colonial administration planned to introduce into the Bengal Army around 1856, that the imaginary and mythography of British writings about the Uprising are constructed. In both historical accounts and fictional narratives, the cartridges are represented as objects of anxiety responsible for the brutal events of fifty-seven. Such accounts allege that the sepoys rebelled after being misled by rumors that the new cartridges, which required the use of teeth, were smeared with animal fat. The sepoys, record the archives, believed the government had deliberately issued these cartridges to defile high caste Hindus and Muslims, who comprised the majority of the Bengal Army, in order to turn them into Christians.[23] This unfounded fear, according to majority of British narratives, led to the Uprising.

Interestingly, it was the administration's belief and opinion, which contributed to the growth of this idea about greased cartridges having started the rebellion. John Lawrence, the celebrated British general and chief commissioner of the NW provinces (Punjab) during the Mutiny, reported with absolute conviction that "the mutiny was due to the greased cartridges, and […] *greased cartridges only*" (qtd. in Malleson III: 470) [emphasis mine]."[24] Historians like Charles Ball, in turn, supplied interesting details affirming and expanding this official position. In his *The History of the Indian Mutiny* (1859), Ball mentions an interesting story. He writes that alarm spread within the sepoy army after a low caste sweeper mocked a Brahmin sepoy by saying: "[your] pride of *caste* would soon be brought low; for [you] would presently have to bite cartridges covered with the fat of cows and pigs!" (I: 37). This conversation apparently ensued after the sepoy refused to share his lotah (drinking vessel) with the sweeper for fear of losing his

[23] See for example the letters, testimonies, and statements by sepoys, native officers, and European officers in *Selections from the Letters Despatches and Other State Papers, preserved in The Military Department of The Government of India 1857-58*. Ed. By George W. Forrest. Vol I-IV. Here after *Selections*.
[24] On another occasion, in a letter written to Sir Charles Trevelyan, a former member of the EIC's Civil Service, Lawrence avers, "The cartridge question was to my mind, indubitably, the immediate cause of the revolt." Letter to Charles Trevleyan, dated 16 December 1857, qtd. in Embree [ed.] 17.

caste.[25] For Ball, the rumor of greased cartridges along with a "species of fanaticism" innate to Hindu/Indian society was "largely auxiliary in working up the real, or assumed, grievances of the native troops" (I: 35).

Following Bruno Latour, one can say that greased cartridges in British narratives were not simply material objects, but represented "matters of concern." They construct an entire cosmology for defining the Other and the rebellion; the cartridge controversy explains curious indigenous social customs and the native mind beyond the pail of colonial knowledge.[26] I will return to this argument shortly, but before that it must be noted that not all nineteenth century writers were convinced with the cartridge explanation as forwarded by Ball, Lawrence, and others. George Malleson, for example, argued that the cartridge issue was specifically devised for explaining the Mutiny to the larger public at home. Battered and shocked by the suddenness and brutality of the rebellion, the public in Britain found satisfactory closure in "a result" that was "beautiful in its simplicity [and] so easy of comprehension," avers Malleson (Malleson III: 470). For Malleson, writing well after the initial hysteria surrounding the events had subsided, the cartridges were not and could not have been the only, or even the most important, reason behind the sepoy's rebellion (ibid. 470-471). Likewise, the Marquess of Clanricarde and Benjamin Disraeli also found the cartridge explanation inadequate. The Marquess declared in Parliament that "to suppose that this [the Mutiny] was a mere question of greased cartridges was absurd." Disraeli echoed similar sentiments in his famous speech on 27 July 1857 when he said: "The decline and fall of Empires are not affairs of greased cartridges" (See, Marquess of

[25] This story finds mention in almost every narrative including historical, fictional, and official correspondences. See for example, Major-General Hearsey to the Secretary to the Government of India, dated 11 February 1857, in *Parliamentary* 25; also James Grant *First Love* I: 59.
[26] For a discussion of objects and things as "matters of fact" and "matters of concern," see Latour 'Matters' 157-158.

Caliricarde, 6 July1857, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, vol. CXLVI: 951; Benjamin Disraeli, 27 July 1857, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, vol. CXLVII: 475).[27]

In the subcontinent too, where in the months prior to the rebellion the climate was rife with rumors about the cartridges, many officers remained unconvinced. In the North Indian cantonment town of Meerut, where the situation was most tense with the native troopers regularly displaying signs of restlessness in the months preceding the May 10th outbreak, British officers were convinced that 'grease' had nothing to do with sepoy discontent either at their barracks or in any of the other stations of the Gangetic plain. In a letter sent by Captain H.G. Craigie from Meerut to Major-General Hewitt, commanding officer of the Meerut division, Craigie writes,

> We have *none* of the objectionable cartridges, but the men say that if they fire *any kind of cartridge* at present they lay themselves open to the imputation from their comrades and from other regiments of having fired the objectionable ones. (*Selections* I: 228-229) [emphasis mine].[28]

In the Proceedings of the Native Court of Inquiry assembled at Meerut on the following day to inquire into the disobedience of the 3rd cavalry troopers, Colonel GMC Smyth testified that:

> none of them [the sepoys] assigned any reason for refusing [to use the cartridges], beyond saying that they would get a bad name; not one of them urged any scruple of religion; they all said they would take these cartridges if the others did (ibid. 231).

[27] Such dismissals, however, had little or no impact on Victorian imagination. The cartridge remained central in discussions, debates, press reports, and fictional and historical representations. In this, the cartridge issue was similar to the "rape scripts" – the stories about rebel torture and rape of innocent European women that circulated in spite of government reports strongly denying any such case. For "rape scripts," see Paxton; Sharpe.

[28] Craigie was in command of the disaffected 3rd Cavalry, which 'started' the Rebellion in Meerut on 10 May 1857. Craigie's letter was dated 24 April 1857.

We find official corroboration of both Craigie and Smyth's observations in a Memorandum from Colonel K. Young, the Judge Advocate-General of the Army, sent to Colonel C. Chester, on 29 April 1857. Young in his capacity as Judge Advocate-General notes,

> There is absolutely no apparent reason whatever why the men of the 3rd Regiment, Light Cavalry, should have declined to use the cartridge served out to them [….] (ibid. 238).

Religious scruple is not even mentioned once as a possible reason.

Amaresh Misra in his recent two-volume work on the Mutiny, however, says that even if the original cause of sepoy concern with the cartridges was fear of religious pollution, by the summer of fifty-seven this consternation had assumed, under the influence of various ideological vectors, a political form. Misra argues that sepoy plan to attack the Fort William at Calcutta was discovered as early as February and this daring plan of attacking the capital of British India should have suggested to the British agents that they were in reality dealing with a through and through political insurrection. But the government agents focused instead on religion; explaining to the troops that the government was not interested in converting them into Christians lead the sepoys to believe all the more that something sinister was afoot in the Company headquarters.[29] In reality, the decision by the sepoys of the 3rd Regiment, Light Cavalry at Meerut to decline using *any* cartridge was a symbolic move against the Company. It signaled a general refusal to obey orders. Only one lone voice recognized this in the early days of the mutiny. Brevet-Major Campbell reported to Major J. Waterfield in a letter written on 30 April 1857 about the unruly disposition of the native troops:

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[29] See, Misra, *The War of Civilisations*, vol. 1, especially chapter 4. See, 'Statement made by Lt. A.S. Allen 34th Regiment Native Infantry, and countersigned by Lt. Colonel S.G. Wheller, Commanding 34th Regiment Native Infantry, dated, Barrackpore, 8 February, 1857' informing authorities about the plot, in *Selections*, Vol. I: 17-18. Also, *Selections* 14-17, for Major-General J.B. Hearsey's letter informing the same to Major A.W. Mayhew, Deputy-Adjutant-General of the Army, dated, Head Quarters, Presidency Division, Barrackpore, 8 February, 1857.

> […] it was *quite evident* that their conduct was the result of *no thoughtlessness* or *sudden resolution*, but had been well considered and determined on (ibid. 242) [emphasis mine].

Campbell's letter and Misra's claims compel us to take careful note of the sepoy witnesses at the Native Court of Inquiry that was held after the 3rd Regiment, Light Cavalry refused to obey orders. Both Hindu and Muslim sepoys stated at the Inquiry that though the cartridges looked unobjectionable they still would not use them, but none would say for sure why. They would only say: "[t]here is nothing objectionable in these cartridges; they are exactly the same as the old, but some objectionable rumour has got abroad regarding them." Or, "a suspicion attaches to them, but I cannot say on what point" (ibid. 236; 234).[30] Bhuggun Tindal, another sepoy witness, claims,

> I never heard an objection of any kind [by the troops] against them, and even now I cannot understand what point in particular is objected to. I have never heard anything beyond some general rumour which no one is able to particularise (ibid. 237).[31]

It is difficult to say from reading these depositions whether these sepoy witnesses were honest or whether they were hiding something. Whether they were being diplomatic or whether they were deliberately misleading their officers to buy time? After all, it was only within weeks after this Court of Inquiry was held that the regiments at Meerut rebelled. Yet, whether it was a sudden mutiny or a concerted effort, the British were caught off guard, failing to come to terms with and understand the events. Within a situation of all-round uncertainty, British efforts were directed at positing some knowledge out of sepoy and other testimonials. By arranging an official court of inquiry, they hoped to glean out of witness statements an explanatory narrative.

[30] Depositions of Doorga Singh and Sook Lall Singh.
[31] Deposition of Bhuggun Tindal. See *Selections* 230-237 for all the depositions.

If the cartridge was an object of anxiety for the British, it was no less important to the rebel imagination as well. One is reminded of Bahadur Shah Zafar's sardonic couplet:

Na Iran ne kiaya, na Shah Russ ne, –

Angrez ko tabah kiya Kartoosh (Cartouche) ne (FSUP I : 239).

Originally composed in Urdu, this couplet, one of many penned by Zafar the octogenarian last Mughal king and a poet of no little repute, circulated widely throughout the Indian subcontinent during the Uprising. It was, as Misra asserts, part of a propaganda war that was waged between the two parties during the Uprising. Interestingly, British translation of the couplet is wrong. It does not say that the "Mighty English, who boast of having vanquished 'Russ' (Russia) and Iran [references to the Crimean war and the Persian Gulf conflict] have been overthrown in Hindoostan by a simple cartridge." The lines are much more satirical and say: "Neither Iran, nor the Russian Czar/ But a mere cartridge destroyed the English" [my translation]. Whether the poet-king really believed in the greased cartridge controversy, I cannot tell. But the royal court of Delhi had no hesitation about circulating this couplet and spreading its message amongst the populations of the land. H.H. Greathed, the British agent who translated the couplet, was spot on with one comment: "A consciousness of power had grown up in the Army [around the cartridge controversy], which could only be exercised by mutiny." Similarly, Sir William Muir recorded: "The cry of the cartridge brought the latent spirit of revolt into action" (*FSUP* I: 330). Both Greathed and Muir were right: for the rebel think-tank the cartridge was an organizational tool; they used the issue to provoke and organize mass resistance against foreign rule.[32]

In focusing exclusively on the cartridge issue, the British administration overlooked more pressing socio-economic and political issues at the heart of the rebellion. This foreclosure of

[32] I discuss indigenous discourses in my final chapter, where I return again to the question of how religion was used by the rebels to swell their ranks and deliver legitimacy to their actions.

economic and political issues as responsible causes for the insurrection and the concurrent fetishization of the cartridge issue – "I know it is not the most important cause, but still …" – served a critical ideological project for the colonial administration. By implying to average Britons that the rebellion was founded on religious bigotry the cartridge issue successfully quelled concerns regarding the rebellion's possible anti-colonial character.[33] It explained the grievances of the native population with colonial rule as based on archaic notions of religion and pollution, and not predicated upon an enlightened call to freedom or a genuine resistance against foreign occupation or a reaction to British misrule.[34] And it is important to note that an object – the cartridge – occupies the heart of this elaborate discursive construction.

The over-determination of the cartridge as an object cause of concern for the administration, however, does not reveal fully the trajectory of anxious fascination with material objects in Victorian imagination. Insofar as the cartridge functions to strategically rearrange imperial knowledge about the Other, these objects offer a partial picture of imperial encounter with the Other in moments of crisis. It is therefore crucial to turn to objects that disclose a far more fundamental issue at stake in imperial encounter with dangerous objects. These are essentially objects which though known transform into dangerous things following unanticipated native use. Such transformations produce anxiety over the failure of knowledge, and subsequently dramatize a recuperation of imperiled imperial subjectivities.[35] The well documented anxiety about *chapattis*, baked unleavened breads that were rumored to have

[33] Disraeli in his July 27th speech had raised the question – "Is it a military mutiny, or is it a national revolt?" In a long speech delivered to the Parliament only two months after the initial outbreak, the Conservative Opposition leader had opened a frontal attack on the Palmerstone government, claiming that the "conduct of the Bengal army" was a sign of "general discontent" of the Indian people as a whole, and not a army mutiny. See, *Hansard Parliamentary Debates*, 3 series, July 27, 1857, vol. CXLVII: 440-472.
[34] This opinion survives even today, perpetuated through the decades by almost every other European and American historian. See for example the opening paragraph in Michael Edwardes's *Battles of the Indian Mutiny*.
[35] By 'use' I mean both physical/material use of the object as well as the specific mode of enjoying that object by the native Other.

circulated throughout the Northern and Central provinces just before the outbreak, is a good example. The anxiety over *chapattis* reflects, as Homi Bhabha notes, the failure of the British administration to explain through existing structures of colonial rule the circulation of organic knowledge.[36] It is a compelling illustration of anxiety surfacing due to the fracture between what was known of the Other and what remained as the Other's unknown, dangerous underbelly. For what these circulating *chapattis* signified, whether conspiratorial missives or a mere ritualistic practice of the natives remained unknown to the administration. In a sense, both the *chapatti* and cartridge illustrate the inadequacy of the colonial administration – the failure of its superior technocratic and military rule – to effectively control and survey the Other. The traumatic impact of and the repeated cultural engagement with the mutiny as a mode of negotiating this trauma, needs to be contextualized qua this anxiety over encountering the fragility of colonial discourse to successfully know the Other and Other space.[37] What was shattered by the mutiny was, therefore, the exclusive rational and informational cartography on which the colonial state was founded – the singular and brutal dismantling of 'knowledge' as an institutional pace extra-institutional support system to colonialism.[38]

An interesting example of object anxiety in relation to imperial knowledge system is found in John Kaye's *History of the Sepoy War in India*. While discussing how signs of an impending mutiny were already present before 1857, Kaye mentions the curious case of the lotah. This ubiquitous drinking vessel, which "every native in India carrie[d] as surely as he

[36] Bhabha writes that ordinary and known objects opened a gap in British knowledge during the Mutiny, shattering their presumed mastery. See, Bhabha, "By Bread Alone" 283-302. For a discussion of *chapattis* as a form of indigenous communication, see Bayly. There were other forms of indigenous communications and communicative apparatuses, which provoked anxiety by challenging and rupturing administrative knowledge systems, see, for example, Panchkari Bandopadhyay.

[37] See Bhabha's discussion of how this nonsensical space within colonial regime displaces identities by deconstructing the dualities around which colonial discourse and rule are founded. Bhabha, "Articulating the Archaic," pp. 175-178.

[38] For a discussion on the importance of knowledge systems to colonial rule, see Richards, *The Imperial Archive*.

carrie[d] his head," often transformed into a dangerous thing within colonial prisons used by the inmates as a weapon against each other or even the colonial officials (Majendie 83). Kaye writes,

> A Hindoo, or a Hindooised Mahomedan, is nothing without his Lotah. A Lotah is a metal drinking-vessel, which he religiously guards against defilement, and which he holds as a cherished possession when he has nothing else belonging to him in the world. But a brass vessel may be put to other uses than that of holding water. It may brain a magistrate, or flatten the face of a gaoler, and truly it was a formidable weapon in the hands of a desperate man. (Kaye I: 198-199).

The lotah was not simply an article of daily use, but represented for the British the schismatic social politics of the colonized Other – people from each of the four castes carried and zealously guarded their own lotah so as not to be polluted by sharing, touching, or using a lotah carried by a member of another caste.[39] The lotah was one more signifier for understanding social and caste practices of the Other, and for pinning the Other in knowledge; a knowledge necessary for adapting colonial rule to meet the specific demands of the colonized's culture.[40]

This construction of the lotah within colonial discourse must be kept in mind while reading Kaye's passage. The lotah in the passage constitute two specific problems: one, at the level of knowledge-making, that is, the lotah as defining the Other, and, second, the problem of exercising effective control over indigenous violence, that is, the lotah as a weapon. In other words, while the lotah is a signifier for defining the Other ("nothing without"), it also

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[39] It must be mentioned of course that the notion of a rigid fourfold caste hierarchy, as Partha Chatterjee has noted, represented a skewed vision of the colonial space and indigenous culture. Knowledge was thus from the very beginning false knowledge, founded on misrecognition, misreading, and deliberate mistranslation of the indigenous culture. See, Chatterjee 'Caste and Subaltern Consciousness' 169-209.

[40] For references to the lotah in ethnographic studies of Indian culture and sepoy character, see, Shore 477; W.D.A. 360. Also, in the *Census* 212. The lotah (often spelled as lotá) is also mentioned in Whitworth 182; Yule et al 522. Interestingly, however, there is no separate entry on the lotah in William Crooke's 1906 book, *Things Indian*. But Crooke's preface explains the regular reference to the object found in the other works: "[to] discuss some of the quaint and curious matters connected with the country." See, Crooke v.

problematizes the notion of a segregated religious ordination of the Other space. We have no clear-cut distinction between Hindus and Muslims, but a third category emerges – the Hinduised Muslim. This category designates the Other space and its history as not simply divisible in terms of religion and culture, but as open to cooption and syncreticism, thereby posing a serious challenge to the British practice of 'divide and rule.'[41] Kaye's concern over the prisoner's dangerous use of the lotah brings to the surface the desperation of failing to control a shifting symbolic order, and articulates a reason for that failure, namely the inability of the administration to control transgressive objects and agents. The failure of colonial knowledge to correctly define the Other culture is directly related to this inability to exercize control. The use of the conjunction "but," in Kaye's text, functions not merely to connect two aspects of knowledge – the lotah as a Hindu religio-cultural artifact and the lotah as a weapon – but also to represent a moment when authority is threatened. It is a moment when the established untainted image of the colonizer's self/I cracks.

Kaye suggests that the failure of the administration to prevent lotah-riots in jails was a direct result of the Company's policy to refrain from intervening into outrageous native religio-cultural practices. Such neglect, Kaye contends, was responsible for the evolution of dangerous situations within the colony. Yet the kind of discipline Kaye imagines could not have been possible without the administration risking a general conflagration. Kaye reminds his readers of attempts made by the administration, following lotah-riots, "to substitute the earthenware vessels" in the place of the metal 'lotah'." But the step constituted "in the eyes of the people, […] another insidious attempt to convert prison discipline into a means of religious persecution;"

[41] An early example of anxiety over two religions uniting can be found in Philip Meadows Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug*, where the overriding enigma with the Thugee cult appears to be tied to a political concern over both Hindus and Muslims acting together, as a group, in complete disregard of their individual religious identities and practices. I thank my friend Sandeep Banerjee for bringing this point to my notice.

another attempt by the administration to covertly reduce all prisoners to one caste. On more than one occasion, Kaye notes, government attempt to ban the use of lotah in prisons was resisted by the prisoners. And "in more than one place" the resentment of the prisoners was "shared by the populations of the town" (Kaye I: 199).[42]

This concern over the lotah, its transformation from a known object into a violent thing and the failure of the administration to prevent the transformation, foreshadows Kaye's anxiety about the Mutiny. The sepoys, too, in Kaye's account, transform from being faithful and submissive objects to being thing-like murderers of women and children. Like the jail-officials, military officers also failed to predict and prevent this change. The European officers of the army, according to Kaye, made a critical mistake believing staunchly in the "fidelity of the Native Army of India" (Kaye I: 202-204).[43] Sporadic outbreaks by the sepoys, as at Vellore in 1806 or Barrackpore in 1824, were never regarded as anything more than the "naughtiness of the child," lacking "the stern resolution of manhood" (ibid. 326). European officers believed a "few sentences of well-chosen, well-delivered Hindostanee" from them were enough to alleviate the sepoy's grievances (ibid. 270). Though intermittent incidents of discontent led to an understanding that the sepoy's "character was made up of inconsistencies [which] made him a very difficult person to manage," Kaye notes the obvious: "we did not think [then] that they made him a dangerous one" (ibid. 326). The Uprising, however, changed all that. The sepoys broke all filial obligations and engaged in a brutal rebellion against their colonial masters. The

[42] For official reports on lotah riots, see, Mouat 96-97, 160. Consider the following passage from Mouat's report: "The manner in which these ruffians are at present allowed to congregate, is eminently destructive of discipline, and not without serious risk to magistrates and other officers visiting the Jail. The lotah, with its neck and a strong cord attached to it, is a very formidable weapon of offence, and the daos and khoodalees with which the convicts work outside, might readily and fatally be employed, for purposes of violence, by desperate characters" (160).

[43] In spite of occasional instances of mutiny, Kaye asserts, the British officers retained an unflinching confidence in the army; like a father's in his children. The relation of the Native Regiments with their officers was indeed one of filial obedience – "[T]hey called him their father, and he [the officer] rejoiced to describe them as his 'babalogue' – his babies" (Kaye I: 258).

confidence of the British officers in their ability to pacify the child-like itinerant sepoy with paternal words of wisdom withered away as sepoys took to rebellion in spite of repeated coaxing from their officers.[44] Kaye explains: "as we now understand the matter [while] more genial qualities sparkled upon the surface" of sepoy character, "more forbidding traits lay dark and disguised, and were not discernible in our ordinary intercourse" (ibid. 327).

Obscure Objects of Rebel Desire

The Mutiny – sudden, unanticipated, momentous, bloody, and inexplicable – emerging out of the barracks of the colonizing forces, that is, from within the colonizer's body politic, and forcing asunder the established colonial symbolic order, resembles most thoroughly the Lacanian definition of the Thing, i.e., the Real.[45] Zizek, in his inimitable style, explains the Thing as a mysterious, inexplicable force that is excessive, inhuman, and evil; a kaleidoscopic assortment of innocence, goodness, monstrous corruption, and sexual abjection, all of which stand revealed at each turn of the kaleidoscope. (Every turn of the page of a mutiny narrative presents a similar description of the Mutiny.) Zizek's example for the Thing is Harpo Marx. This "mute Marx brother" in whom "childhood innocence and goodness overlap with extreme corruption and sexual dissolution," Zizek says, is a "monster." This is because "we are never sure if he is a witty genius or a total imbecile," consequently, "one does not know where one stands with him." "This absolute undecidability – or, rather, incommensurability," Zizek argues, "makes him a monstrous

[44] See for e.g., Kaye II: 83-84 (for such events at Delhi); III: 268-271 (at Bareilly), III: 362-365 (at Jhansi).

[45] In calling the Mutiny a Thing, I am following the definition of the *das Ding* or Thing as found in early Lacan, especially in his Seminar VII, where Lacan defines the Thing as Real, segregated and absent from the symbolic except at moments of transgression. In later Lacan, of course, this compartmentalized definition of the Thing as Real is made increasingly more complicated, first, by the introduction of objet a or the part-object as Thing in Seminar XI, and, then, the issue of rapport of the Thing with the Signifier qua connectors, i.e. essentially designating a non-rapport, in Seminar XX. But, for the moment, if we stay with Lacan's elaboration of the character, function, and agency of the Thing as found in his seminar on Ethics, we can form an idea about how the Mutiny shares an uncanny resemblance with the *das Ding* and helps explain the affective agency of the event. See, Lacan *Ethics*, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, and *Encore*. For a discussion of the Thing qua Jouissance, and its various paradigms in Lacan, see Jacques-Alain Miller 'Paradigms of Jouissance.' For an interesting discussion of the representation of the Thing and its intrusive agency in popular films, see, Zizek, 'The Thing from Inner Space.' Zizek in this article concentrates only on the Lacanian definition of the Thing as found in Seminar VII.

Thing" (Zizek 'The Thing' 217). This reading of Harpo not only offers a good working definition of the Thing, but Zizek's depiction of Harpo as an ambivalent character appears easily interchangeable with Kaye's descriptions of the sepoy in his *History*.

The incipiently monstrous character of the sepoy army is linked to its position within the colonial body politic. Like the *das Ding*, which as a force is strictly neither inside nor outside of the body, the sepoy army was an ambiguous body of outsiders (colonized subjects, peasant-soldiers) working for the exclusive inside (the colonizers). During the Uprising, it is this ambiguous body that suddenly erupts into a monstrous existence through transgression. Their mutiny and the strategic underpinnings of that mutiny resist symbolization through existent colonial sign-systems.[46] As Rudrangshu Mukherjee explains,

> In the moment of mutiny the sepoys cast off the markers with which an alien power had sought to regiment them and thus set them apart from the peasantry from which they were recruited […] they reclaimed their peasant character. They merged with the ordinary people.

But it was not a simple merger for the sepoys retained one 'marker' – their weapons, thereby transforming into "peasant with arms" (Mukherjee 'Satan' 99).

The flippant line dividing these native soldiers recruited from peasant populations and trained in European arts of warfare (they were the most modern army east of Suez), and the peasants who took to the rebellion following Meerut, further adumbrates the Thingness of the sepoy army.[47] For not only does the sepoy escape the objectification of regimental confinement

[46] Unnerving were reports that described the rebel sepoys as fighting against the British in their full regimental colors and, at times, even under the Union Jack. In James Grant's *First Love and Last Love*, we find mention of this interesting situation: "the Kurnaul mutineers […] Harrower […] could see their arms […] the waving of their standards, which were their ordinary regimental colours – the Queen's and Union Jack. Oddly enough, they did not relinquish these, as they deemed them consecrated and holy […]" (II: 252-253). In *Reminiscences of the Great Mutiny*, W. Mitchell-Forbes writes seeing rebel sepoys at Lucknow fighting "under their English colours […]" (70).
[47] See, Stokes, *The Peasant Armed*. Mukherjee, *Awadh in Revolt*.

and discipline, they even render the colonial state impotent to effectively control them. As the sepoys merge into crowds of peasants, the authorities had no possible way to identify them out of the multitude. This merger of the sepoy with the native peasantry, as Stokes, Mukherjee, Guha point out, sent colonial authority into a downward spiral. One native loyalist noted this predicament in his diary when he observed the impossibility of detecting rebels from within a mob: "It would be impossible to mention the names of all evil-minded men who joined the [rebel] standard" (qtd. in Mukherjee 'Satan' 100). For the administration, the rabble was the same sea of brown faces they abhorred, but with a significant difference – it was now armed to the teeth thanks to the disgruntled sepoys joining ranks with the peasants.[48] The perplexing actions of the sepoy army, their sudden frenzied mutiny, indiscriminate massacres, baffling exhibitions of symbolic affiliations to their regimental colors, and their inconspicuous transformation into peasants opened up an uneasy void within the established symbolic order – neither sepoys nor peasants, they were the 'peasant armed!'; a new configuration that the colonial authority had never expected to deal with.

It is interesting to note however that Kaye believes the sepoy was always in possession of a dank underbelly. It is not that they transformed overnight from being loyal to "murderers of [our] women and children" (Majendie 91). The sepoy was always split – genial on the outside but distant from inside. The problem is not what Kaye thinks: the officials failed to unravel this inside. To pay any sincere regard to Kaye's critique of the administration is to fall prey to what Spivak calls "strategic essentialism." For inherent to Kaye's critique is the premise of the Other's cultural difference. Similar to British discourses about the cartridges, the condemnation of the administration also veers towards consolidating the established opinion about the Oriental's

[48] One of the first things mutinying regiments did was to loot the arsenal and treasury. It put them in charge of both weapons and money.

essential difference. I want to echo Benjamin and Zizek here to say that this "culturalization of politics" must be replaced by "politicization of the culture" in order to bring to the fore the structural dissonance at the heart of the colonial project of recruiting native troops (Zizek *Violence* 140). That is to say, the problem of the mutiny and sepoy participation must be read in context of the creation of the sepoy as a "position without identity" within the colonial social order. Let me elaborate.

The sepoy as the military arm of the colonial machinery came into existence circa 1757 during the Battle of Plassey when Robert Clive's motley crew of 950 British soldiers and 2100 Indian sepoys defeated the Nawab of Bengal's numerically superior force of 50,000 soldiers and 40 pieces of artillery, the latter commanded by the experienced French officer Sinfray. The Battle of Plassey can be termed the 'founding moment' of British colonial rule in India – the moment that determined the critical move of the East India Company from subservient mercantilism to outright bureaucratic, military, and fiscal control of the subcontinent.[49] At the heart of this 'founding moment' lies the 'founding gesture' that constitutes the sepoy as a "position without identity" – the recruitment and formation of the first native sepoy regiment, the 1st BNI or *Lal Paltan*, as the right arm of British military strength.[50] What interests me here is how the founding gesture of recruiting soldiers from the native populations as a symbolic act of establishing relationship with the Other also produced the sepoy as an ambivalent socio-political

[49] In fact, during the Uprising it was a common belief among the population, that 1857 marking the centenary year of British rule in India would also be its last. Prophecies and seditious proclamations stressing this circulated widely throughout the affected regions during and just before 1857 This, like the lotah, is an interesting illustration of the double bind afflicting British colonial project. The date they had historically metaphorized as a date of glory, returned to haunt them. The rebels used 1757 to mark 1857 as the year of the demise of British rule. See, the prophecy of Shah Nimat Allah Wali in Quraishi [ed.] *Cry for Freedom* 86-99.

[50] The *Lal Paltan*, the regiment of native sepoys who fought for the British at Plassey, was the first regiment of the Bengal Army. The name obviously refers to the coats worn by the sepoys – redcoats. Later they were also known by the name of 'Galliez ki Paltan' after its commander, Captain Primrose Galliez. Though 1757, historically speaking, is not the moment of this military experiment, Major Stringer Lawrence was the first to recruit and organize native regiments on European model in 1747, it was only after Clive's victory at Plassey that the policy of recruiting and training native regiments found favor. For a thorough study on the military history of the East India Company between 1770 and1830, see, Alavi. Also, Keay.

configuration. The British military practice of recruiting exclusively from the peasant populations of the wheat producing regions of the subcontinent followed the ideology of military recruitment prevalent in Britain during the eighteenth-century.[51] In India, however, it only produced a displaced, dislocated, and disjointed body that inhabited a domain of existence between the common masses, from which they were recruited, and the European officers and soldiers, rising to whose ranks and pay scale was simply impossible.[52] The sepoy was neither a peasant nor a thoroughly Europeanized soldier. As Rajat Kanta Ray and, more recently, Sabyasachi Dasgupta affirm, the average sepoy though originating from the peasant community was transformed in the course of his service in the army into someone different from the common agricultural *volk* of the subcontinent (Ray *Felt Community*; Dasgupta 'The Rebel Army in 1857' 161-174). The sepoy gained, in the course of experience, a broader vision of history, life, and polity, all of which enabled him subsequently to assume the mantle of leadership during the Uprising.

From a psychoanalytical perspective, we can identify two distinct modalities at operation here: first, the conscious symbolic objectification of the sepoy and, second, the production of an unconscious dislocation or gap in effect of this constitution. As a symbolic object, the sepoy

[51] The formation of the sepoy army was, as Alavi explains, also a moment of colonial rewriting of subcontinental identity. For this rewriting, the administration relied on an ethnographic demarcation of the subcontinent on basis of knowledge that was far distant from ground realities of the colonial social space. For instance, the imposition of an exclusively British tradition of recruitment disqualified populations from rice-eating regions from joining service on grounds of them being weak and effete. Similarly, the decision to distance earlier Mughal practices of enlisting urban-based Afghan and Pathan *risaldars* implied that the sepoy army was made up mostly of high-caste Hindus, thereby marginalizing the Muslim populations of the subcontinent. It was an imperial policy founded on notions of martial-race versus the non-martial, effeminate rest, a belief in the influence of climactic and dietary habits as well as a deeply entrenched anxiety about Muslims. Muslim recruitment was mostly limited to the irregular cavalry like Rattray or Hodson's horse for example. This division of the colonized populations in terms of race and religion was in tune with the nineteenth century colonial vision of India that featured a the three-phase model of Indian history corresponding with Hindu/Aryan, Muslim, and British occupations of the land. A 'modern' India was built within the barracks – the India of high-caste Brahmins from the wheat-producing, 'cow-belt' regions of the subcontinent that we witness today as claiming its pound of flesh was a product of Company policies. See, Alavi.

[52] Though this difference from the common villager did not completely alienate the sepoy from his peculiar extraction, it did not make his returning to the life of a peasant any easier. See, Ray, espc., 'The Mentality of the Mutiny' in *Felt Community*. For a discussion on colonial recruitment policy of the sepoy army, see, Alavi 35-55.

army lent credibility to the colonial fantasy of the colonizer as a subject of Historical Necessity. In other words, the sepoy as an object of fantasy functioned to conjoin the colonizer as a symbolic subject to a being. The sepoys were a responsibility (to colonize, to educate, to terrorize, to exploit, to reform etc.), and allowed the agents of colonial venture to psychologically transcend their own objectivity within the colonial system as a mere functionary or functionality. The sepoys so fondly called *babalogue* or "our little children" by their European officers offered a semblance of agency to the subject.[53] It conjoined a subject otherwise split and existing as a mere product of symbolic assertion to a living, breathing, desiring being via the imaginary desire for enlightening the Other.[54] The sepoy as an object offered the colonizer a being that is nothing but a semblant, veiling the colonizer's purely functional agency within a system that in reality was outside individual control. Like the neurotic subject who is unconscious of what his desire desires, the colonial agent is unaware that his desire to reform and educate the poor Other sustains an Other's desire, an Other desire.[55]

Accordingly, when the sepoys broke away from the parameters of this fantasy by declaring mutiny, when they emerged outside of the symbolic qua fantasy, they surfaced as the Thing. All efforts at knowing and symbolizing the Other through force and fantasy, thereby establishing a hegemonic singularity of symbolic power structures for seamless and continuous

[53] A semblance of course, as Jacques-Alain Miller defines it, is a veil that masks the Real, the gap or hole. Jacques-Alain Miller, 'On Semblances' 14.

[54] The sepoy, in particular, offered their colonial officers an opportunity to assert paternalism, to become symbolic Fathers to imaginary children, to assume the role of educators and guardians to the native soldiery. This extensive family romance of colonialism was also ideologically charged. It allowed the colonizer to ascertain and legitimize his superiority in contrast to the 'cruel' Mughal rule before by declaring his caring patronage of the Other. The sepoys were the new children of a new age, as their British officers were the progenitors of a new civilization, far better than either the conceited Muslims or the degraded Hindus of the past. This pre-colonial past was as much a construction of colonial conceit as was the belief in sepoy obedience.

[55] The writings of George Orwell demonstrate this vividly – his experiences as a colonial officer caught between the (colonial) Other and the (colonized) Other, as his own experience during 'shooting an elephant' explain, weans away subjectivity and being by reducing it to the position of the subject burdened by the Other's desire. The subject, as Lacan states, is truly alienated in desire. It is neither his, nor does it work for him, it belongs to the Other all along.

administration of the Other were proven insufficient by the Uprising. The Other, in the process of being Othered, was produced as a monster; a hole within the very structural apparatus of colonial discourse. The sepoy was a product of violence; and at the moment of rebellion they tore the feigned ideals of modernity claimed by colonialism to reveal it as what it really is: "an autocracy [sustained by a] meticulously constructed […] monopoly of violence" (Mukherjee 'Satan'). As Mukherjee further claims, the Mutiny "shattered that monopoly by matching an official, alien violence by indigenous violence of the colonized" (ibid.). The "chickens" had indeed come home to roost for the English in 1857.[56] The brutal, fanatic sepoy revealed through the Mutiny what it really was – a mindless killing machine that had been made to order by British colonialism.

This discussion on the connection between material-epistemic practices of colonialism and its fantastic objects opens up the possibility of interrogating the specific object anxieties we find in mutiny narratives, as well as the broader structural relationship between anxiety and colonialism. I will consider the latter in conclusion of this chapter. Before that I will focus on fictional representations of object anxieties as sites where both the disruptive threat of these objects and the discursive imperial engagement with that threat are clearly visible.

In Kaye, Holloway, and Malleson's accounts, the Mutiny is a convenient staging point for inquiring into and (*re)*establishing histories of the self and the Other; for explaining the Mutiny as part of a historical struggle (in the Hegelian sense) between modernity and degeneration, and more generally between the West and the East.[57] Such metaphorizations of 1857 overwrite the real conditions of colonialism as responsible for the outbreak re-presenting

[56] Malcolm X controversially commented that "chickens have come home to roost" on being asked for his reactions on John F. Kennedy's assassination following the speech 'God's Judgement of White America,' December 4 1963. Aimee Cesaire's views on fascism as a return of violence perpetrated through colonialism to Europe is uncannily similar and is also more than apt for describing the 1857 mutiny.
[57] Western historians continue to perpetuate this idea. See, for e.g. works by Ward, David, Dalrymple.

instead administrative failure, indigene conspiracy, the Other's religious bigotry, and the consumptive hazards of the Other space as responsible causes. Recent research confirms that Kaye and Malleson's long influential theories about 1857 are either false or highly inadequate for explaining the Uprising. These recent studies have also shown the ideological complicity between contemporary histories and the nineteenth century imperial need to explain the Other as civilizationally degenerate.[58] In the field of cultural and literary studies, Jenny Sharpe's *Allegory of Empire* (1993), Nancy Paxton's *Writing Under the Raj* (1999), Patrick Brantlinger's *Rule of Darkness* (1988), and Gautam Chakravarty's *Indian Mutiny and British Imagination* (2005) have focused on British cultural texts to elucidate this very point. What has remained unexplored however is the relationship between history or fiction as metaphor and a buried impossible memorization of the event as *thing*. Questions like how does the metonymic memory unconsciously assert its presence within discursive metaphoric formulations about the event or how the anxiety provoking, panic inducing memory is consciously imported into metaphoric representations for purely ideological purposes of defining the Other as different remains unexplored.[59] In my next sections, I will bring these questions to bear on my investigation of object anxieties and representations of these anxieties in Victorian fiction through a discussion of Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* and Conan Doyle's *The Sign of Four*. My discussion of the novels will not offer detailed analysis of the texts. Rather, my focus will be limited to two specific moments illustrative of how anxiety-provoking objects are negotiated and discursively contained to reclaim threatened imperial subjectivities. Both examples will show how the

[58] See for example Peter Robb's reading of H.G. Keene and Rice Holmes's 19th century histories and David Washbrook's critique of Dalrymple's work. Robb 60-63; Washbrook .

[59] More recently there have been a few efforts to explicate the relationship between the Mutiny as a traumatic memory and British imagination. See for example Herbert's recent work, *War of No Pity*, particularly his discussion of Elizabeth Braddon's 1862 novel *Lady Audley's Secret*. See also, Nayder 'Rebellious Sepoys and Bigamous Wives' 31-42. More generally, the relationship between the Uprising and Victorian literature has been established by Gautam Chakravarty and Aishwarya Lakshmi. See, Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny*; Lakshmi 'The Mutiny Novel' 229-251.

nervous memory of the Mutiny and its traumatic moments provide templates for figuring inexplicable horrors immanent in both the domestic and colonial worlds.

III

Collins's Moonstone: Symbolic Object or a Liminal Thing?

I discuss *The Moonstone* in greater critical detail in my second chapter. Here my specific interest is in the discourse of surveillance that is proposed through the figure of Mr. Murthwaite at the conclusion of the novel. I will look at three critical aspects of this discourse – beginning with how the anxiety-provoking object-thing (moonstone) is disciplined, then, what this particular act of disciplining tells us about the relationship between anxiety and objects/things, and, finally, the reconfiguration of memories of the 1857 Uprising within the *Moonstone* as an instance of imperial memorialization. (This final point is only pitched here. I detail it in my following chapter.)

The adventures of the moonstone end after the secret Brahmin guardians of the jewel murder Ablewhite and smuggle the stone back to India. Mr. Murthwaite who witnesses the restitution of the stone in an Indian temple writes in his statement: "What will be the next adventures of the Moonstone? Who can tell!" (Collins 472). At first glance, then, the novel appears to have an unconventional ending for a Victorian (mutiny) narrative. Namely, it retracts from narrative and ideological closure. The conclusive moment of a hermeneutic sealing off of the thing into an object, i.e. the moment when the stone is finally restored to its rightful place (the Indian temple), thus ending the chain of murders and conspiracy, is also a moment of radical re-transformation of the object back into a thing. For this final moment of suture coincides with the failure to predict whether the stone will again embroil distant England in the horrors of death, deceit, and danger. This failure therefore constitutes a problematic paradox. If Mr. Murthwaite's

expansive knowledge and first-person account from the "wild regions of Kattiawar" had led the readers of the novel to a point of closure, his ultimate inability to predict the future movements of the stone foretells the impossibility of establishing complete authoritative control over the Other. As surveillance is held in suspension, and the narrative retracts from closure to *re*-present the stone in its radical otherness, the stone (as a metaphor for the Indian people) presents the Other as beyond colonial knowledge or measure.[60]

Criticisms that read the novel's ending as re-establishing imperial hegemony through surveillance, often overlook the fact that though Murthwaite succeeds in infiltrating and surveying the Other space, he also relinquishes any possibility of sustained surveillance – the stone remains beyond the possibility of confinement.[61] However, as I argue below, this absence of suture does not imply a narrato-ideological opposition to the logic of imperial hegemony. In context of the collapsing of distinct spaces and desires, it is a strategic endeavor to realign the self-Other, metropole-colony differenced positions. For to read Murthwaite's acknowledgement of the impossibility of surveillance as impossibility of exercising control over the Other, is to fail in recognizing a far greater ideological message that is being conveyed in the end. For the anxiety which results from the narrative non-closure cautions the self against *intimacy* with the Other.[62] By intimacy I mean resembling the Other in action, thought, desire, and culture. (This point will be clearer when I discuss the novel in detail in my second chapter.) Intimacy provokes anxiety about being same as the Other; of the disappearance of difference and erasure of the symbolic. It is important to realize that the ideological agency of Collins's craft is not in closure,

[60] This reading is in line with scholars who note Collins's difference from other Victorian writers such as Dickens given the former's desire for a syncretic relationship with the colonized peoples. Of course, Collins can be called more tolerant than Dickens when it comes to the question of the mutiny and how the natives were to be engaged with in its wake. For example, see Nayder's discussion of Collins's view on the Indian Mutiny and his differences with Dickens on the issue. See, Nayder.
[61] See, for example, Roy 'Imperial Semiotic.'
[62] I use intimacy not only in the sexual sense but to define what Ann Stoler calls the "tense and tender ties" between the colonizer and colonized. See, Stoler.

but in the affect produced due to non-closure, that is, in his use of anxiety about the Other as crucial for segregating the two spaces, cultures, and subjectivities. The central concern in the novel is over the shadow of intimacy that the stone casts on everything English. The primary issue consequently is about arresting the dissolving, crumbling, and shifting boundaries between the self and the Other.

The Colonial Farrago

The infamous moonstone, displaced and dislocated from its place of origin, is the immediate cause of anxiety in Collins's novel. As Sherry Turkle following Bruno Latour's contention in *We Have Never Been Modern* asserts, "objects speak in a way that destroys any simple stories we might tell about our relations to nature, history, and the inanimate; they destroy any simple sense we might have about progress and our passage through time." Objects "reveal cracks in the social constructions we take as 'reality'," problematizing thus both national identity and modernity (Turkle 313, 339n19). The danger posed by the moonstone in Collins's novel as a floating object, that is, as an object that is not moored to the symbolic, is apparent to the English mind. As Betteredge, the old butler of Verinder household, exclaims,

> here was our quiet English house *suddenly* invaded by a devilish Indian Diamond – *bringing after it* a conspiracy of living rogues, set loose on us by the vengeance of a dead man [Colonel Herncastle]. Who ever heard the like of it – in the nineteenth-century, mind; in an age of progress, and in a country which rejoices in the blessings of the British constitution? (Collins 46) [emphasis mine].

What the diamond brings after it to "quiet" England is not only a "conspiracy of living rogues," but also unnerving issues of guilt, responsibility, and culpability. The resolution of this anxiety is achieved in the novel through recollection, reenactment, and representation of the stone's

mystifying and violent itinerary, beginning with the preface and ending with Mr. Murthwaite's eyewitness account of the stone's eventual restitution. The narrative journeys across time and space; traveling from India to England and back to India following an object of history, the moonstone, and the history of the empire as a (repressed) object of representation.

A central preoccupation in the novel is to decouple the two distinct spaces and times, the "quiet" England "rejoic[ing] in the blessings of the British constitution" and the "wild" India; a distinction that stands blurred as a result of colonial enterprise. The stone's final but problematic restitution hints ominously of an impending collapse in the future. But even before that, the presumption of difference is compromised by the checkered history of the stone and Colonel Herncastle's contribution within that history. The free circulation of the stone, more than anything else, threatens to expose the buried hypocrisy, vanity, and misrecognitions of metropolitan society about its self and towards the Other. In the course of the narrative, "superior" English culture is shown to mirror the Other's. The various relationships within the text, from Franklin Blake and Rachel Verinder to Murthwaite and the Brahmins, which stand articulated against the history of the moonstone, an object, mirrors a history of pillage, rapine, and murder similar to the history of the rebellious sepoys of the 1857 Uprising. If nothing else, the immediate history of the stone's looting from its rightful owners during the siege of Seringapatam, the Hindu guardians of the treasure, reminded Victorian readers that perhaps the Mutiny was not simply a result of native treachery, but also a reaction of the colonized peoples against unwarranted repression perpetrated by the imperial state. Furthermore, the moonstone as a looted object complicates 'history' of the Other as written by colonialism. The history of the stone, as we learn from the novel's preface, begins in the inexplicable mysticism of Hindu religion and rule. It is thereafter, first, looted from the Hindus by Muslim invaders, and then,

finally, wrested from the 'last' independent Muslim ruler in Southern India, Tipu Sultan, by the British. This 'history' reproduces the model of Indian history made famous, first, by the Orientalists, and, then, by James Mill and Whig historians; all elucidating a three-phase model beginning with Hindus and ending with the British, beginning with ignorance and ending with British colonial rule via a Muslim phase of barbaric oppression. Unfortunately, Herncastle's looting of the stone from Seringapatam throws up an unexpected problem for this history and its prescribed teleology – the British instead of uplifting the country from years of ignorance and oppression, end up murdering, pillaging, and looting like the Muslims before them.

One notes a similar tension driving Kaye's historical projects as well. His insistent critique of the East India Company's corrupt administration in *A History of Sepoy War in India* was an attempt, as I have discussed already, to hold the Company exclusively responsible for the Mutiny and strategically essentialize the causes of the rebellion qua cultural contexts. Similarly in his 1853 book, *The Administration of the East India Company*, where Kaye seeks to represent the Company as a rational objective government, he steers clear from any discussion on the economic motivations driving colonialism. Kaye argues that British presence in India was not directed by petty mercantile or missionary zeal, rather founded on a desire to introduce responsible governance to a country suffering from despotic tyranny. While other European powers in the subcontinent were "traders," "conquerors," "spoliators," and "proselytizers," the British were objective "*administrators*" writes Kaye (57) [my emphasis]. But signs of anxiety over British rule as beneficial, rational, and objective are present throughout. His claims conflict with hard data culled from "the great field of Eastern adventure," confronting him endlessly with a double jeopardy: how to write a history of the Company's administration and its success in India without exposing its autocratic, mercantile, oppressive, scheming, and fanatic deportment.

He circumvents this problem, time and again, by retracting agency from the Company and relegating it to Providence as History. Thereby, the territorial expansion of the Company from Madras to Bengal was "not the result either of commercial cupidity or territorial ambition," rather the Company was "hurried onward by *an irresistible power*, which made them, *in spite of themselves*, Merchant Princes and great territorial Lords" (63) [emphasis mine]. "The great structure of our Indian Empire has been reared as no human intellect would have fashioned it," avers Kaye. "It has been *reared for us as for a chosen people*, and mighty is the responsibility which a trust so imposed upon us entails. The more we consider all the circumstances of the Rise and Progress of the British power in the East, the more palpable and obstinate appears the skepticism which would attribute so stupendous and mysterious a movement to anything but the special interference of an almighty Providence for a purpose commensurate with the grandeur of the design" (64) [emphasis mine]. The Company in Kaye's account is a Historical subject – drawn and driven by providential forces and Historical Necessity into their present glory – and not fuelled by treachery or unjust appropriation of lands and wealth. The specter of violence perpetrated by British colonial rule in India, the tables of gross injustices and exploitative models of colonial administration, are buried under claims of divine design.

In Collins's novel, the character of Colonel Herncastle poses himself as a specter of that violent face of colonial rule. Consequently, he is socially ostracized and distanced in time. He is represented as a product of a degenerate past, unfit to live in the progressive present (Sabin 95-97). The novel while indeed reminding its readers of their share in the Uprising, also seeks to restrain these charges from appearing too general.[63] Unfortunately, neither Herncastle's excommunication nor his death ends the anxiety over colonial injustices. Franklin Blake, Rachel Verinder, and Godfrey Ablewhite are implicated variously for coveting the stone. Moreover,

[63] See, for instance, Ashis Roy; Upamanyu Mukherjee 166-187; and Carens 117-141.

throughout the novel, as the hunt for the missing moonstone rages on, readers are constantly surprised by crumbling of identities as plots merge and intertwine, sleep and wakefulness fuse to produce a state of waking-sleep, and Ezra Jennings's racially hybridized body, a product of sexual/racial intimacy of course, haunts the quiet English countryside as a reminder of how intimate self-Other relations are and how ambiguous the metropole-colony as racial spaces have become. Like the dangerous shivering-sands and Limping Lucy, who articulate working-class grievances, the moonstone reminds its readers of their own complicity in imperialism. In terms of the novel's ideological function, the moonstone is no longer an imaginary object of the empire or a prize/exotic trophy that is to be cherished as a family heirloom, encapsulating stories of colonial derring-do which wait to be narrated to eager listeners who marvel at the grit, determination, and destiny of their colonial ancestors. It is a reminder of the reality of colonial rule.

At the conclusion of the novel, a tentative and temporal closure is reached following the restitution of the stone to its rightful owners, the Hindu Brahmins. Mr. Murthwaite penetrates the wilderness of the colonial space in racial disguise to report on this moment. I discuss in my next chapter Murthwaite's ideological agency in context of post-mutiny anxieties about the Other in greater detail. For the moment, I would like to point out that this restitution of the stone does not constitute a critique of imperialism as John Reed suggests in his discussion of the novel. Collins's novelistic universe does not function as a corrective to the indiscriminate appropriation of sacred or precious objects of the Other by the colonial state. Neither does the ending of the novel offer any portraiture of "paternal benevolence" through the figure of Murthwaite, as Ashis Roy argues. Instead, the ideological processes implicit in the conclusion of the novel are far more complicit with post-mutiny ideologies regarding the best way to control the colony. Briefly

put: First, Murthwaite's successful tracking of the stone in India and his ability to infiltrate the Other's symbolic space in racial disguise reflect post-mutiny demands for *extraordinary* surveillance of the Other; surveillance for gathering more information on indigenous cultural practices. Second, the restitution of the stone within a Hindu temple serves to essentialize the Other's otherness. Reclaimed by the Brahmins and ritually reinstated in the temple, the moonstone in exclusive possession of the Indians facilitates the imaginative reconstruction of an imperial mythos of the 'Self' by distinguishing the other as Other vis-à-vis its inexplicable desire for the stone.[64] As the most intimate object of the Other's desire, the stone defines the Other. This definition of the Other qua otherness opens up the possibility for conceptualizing the self as different, in effect sustaining the circuitry of desire and fantasy within imperial imaginations.

The transformation of the moonstone from an object to thing and back to an object parallels the objectification of another dangerous thing – the thorn in Doyle's *The Sign of the Four*. In Doyle, too, the extraordinary Sherlock Holmes plays a crucial role in defining the object-thing in relation to an existent imperial imaginary of the Other. Ideologically speaking, the trajectories of the moonstone and the thorn are similar. And so are the modalities via which these objects and/or things arrange a theatre for the reclaiming of imperial subjectivity qua anxiety and identity.[65]

Anxiety and Identity in *The Sign of Four*: A Discussion

In the fifth chapter of *The Sign of Four*,[66] the following conversation takes place between Holmes and Watson after they discover the dead body of Bartholomew Sholto:

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[64] To put this theoretically, the Other as an exception is the foundational fantasy that sustains discourse and identity of the self as different from the Other.

[65] For the relation between Doyle's novel and the Indian Mutiny, see Arata. Also, Frank; Keep and Don Randall; Thomas.

[66] Doyle's text can be studied alongside a number of other New Imperialist narratives like Haggard's *She* (1887), Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), and Wells's *The War of the Worlds* (1898). These late- nineteenth-century writings share an anxiety over the inscrutable cultural space of the Other. The Other as Ayesha, Martians, or Dracula threatens the

> In God's name, what does it all mean? I asked. It means murder, said he [Holmes], stooping over the dead man. Ah! I expected it. Look here! He pointed to *what looked like a long dark thorn* stuck in the skin just above the ear. It *looks* like a thorn, said I. It *is* a thorn. You may pick it out. But be careful, for it is poisoned (Doyle 38) [emphasis mine].

The chasm that opens at this particular moment due to Watson's inability to identify a poisonous thorn as the object that has caused the death of Bartholomew Sholto is bridged only by Holmes's encyclopedic knowledge about arcane things – a specialist knowledge that quells anxieties over things of panic.[67] The poisoned spine only *looks like* a thorn to Watson, since he is surprised at the particular use of this familiar object. Therefore, it falls on Holmes to explain how the thorn is used as a weapon in another culture, tracing and connecting the crime with another symbolic space, the British nation with its colony and empire.

Holmes, here, functions as an authentic *representative* in the politico-ideological sense of the term, that is, as an ego-ideal for imperial authority, via his ability to *represent* the issue within a broader horizon of meaning.[68] The detective derives a legitimate authority through this ability to inscribe the crisis zone with an object(ive), meaning, and protocol of engagement, thereby clearing the mists of mystery shrouding common understanding. In the process, he succeeds in evading another horrible (and possibly fatal) entanglement with the alien thing by cautioning Watson–"[y]ou may pick it out. But be careful, for it is poisoned." The dangerous

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metropolitan state and self with either degeneration or death. The drama of contingency, loss, and suture that these texts unanimously stage is critical for understanding the imperial consciousness of late Victorian cultures. For an account of these anxieties, their representation and negotiation in literary imagination, of late Victorian period Stephen Arata's study remains conclusive. The connection between the colonized Other and the Thing is however nowhere more apparent than Richard Marsh's 1897 work *The Beetle*. The 'Beetle' as half-man, half-woman, and half-human, half-insect is the Thing, inhabiting a realm beyond cognitive or epistemic control.

[67] It is important to keep in mind here that unlike Holmes Watson is strongly prejudiced against colonial subjects. His experiences as a doctor in Afghanistan, where he was injured in war against the natives remind him continually of the vicious and treacherous colonized peoples. While this trauma blinds Watson from sympathetically engaging with the Other, Holmes is free from these irrationalities of the mind. See, Arata 103-104.

[68] I draw my argument from Latour's discussion of representation and its connection to the issue of "legitimate representavity" in his essay, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik, or How to Make Things Public." See, Latour 14-16.

thing is therefore checked and transformed into a known object through a linguistic-philosophical act of suture, representing an instance of imperial safeguarding and policing. In the course of the narrative, the final closure would also entail a hermeneutic sealing off of the national space against the threat of the criminal Other and a policing of the unaccounted relations produced by the metropole-colony geopolitical relationship.

The narrative move in the passage from failure to recognize to 'successful' detection/control must be read in context of a third intervening moment, that of the thing's objectification or symbolization in language. This moment, marked by detection, also leads to the establishment of imperial control through knowledge. The moment concurrently builds up the contrast between Watson, who knows but not quite, and Holmes, who knows, thereby establishing the fantasy of Holmes as the 'subject supposed to know,' or the ego-ideal. The need for extraordinary means of investigation to capture what escapes the limits of "ordinary intercourse" connects the figure of Holmes as an extraordinary man to demands for more than ordinary supervision of the Other that we find in post-mutiny discourses such as those of Holloway or Kaye.

Holmes's representation of the thorn entails an interesting reformulation of the obvious relationship between the thorn as a signifier and what it signifies. In explaining to Watson, he restates the obvious as objective truth – "it *is* a thorn"– but re-presents its unnatural threatening agency by radically redefining for it a locus within altered conditions of geo-political existence – post-mutiny nothing is simply as it appears but always haunted by a shadow of death.[69] An analysis of Holmes's engagement with the thorn therefore must necessarily focus on this

[69] The murder and the thorn are metonymically related to the group 'The Sign of Four' and their looting of the Indian treasure at Agra during the Mutiny. This metonymic connection with the Indian Mutiny corroborates the argument I pursue elsewhere regarding how metropolitan identities and existences remained anxious after 1857 in anticipation of another outbreak, and how these circulating anxieties shaped representations and discourses again and again.

construction of "identity-in-difference" as aimed at addressing and suturing anxiety over the threatening shadow. This difference also creates the space for reiterating masterly hegemony over anxieties produced because of colliding and complicit textual motivations.[70]

Repeated representations of anxiety and hermeneutic reconstitution of authority through these moments in Victorian fiction can be identified, following Bhabha, as an unconscious compulsive articulation of mastery in face of continuous disappointments, which are incessantly thrown up in various forms and shapes due to British colonial engagements (Bhabha 'The Other Question' 94-120). Holmes particular negotiation of the thorn, however, does not successfully objectify the thing in language. Holmes's cautioning Watson indicates that the thing is only an object, knowable and identifiable as poisonous or dangerous, as long as it is labeled; the kind of object that might be eventually confined within the institutional space of an Oriental Museum.[71] The *thing* symbolized by language – "it is a thorn" – demands a further level of physical containment. But even then, anxieties about homeland (in)securities are not satisfactorily put down. In spite of several layers of epistemic, linguistic, and/or institutionalized containment, the object remains as a dangerous thing, posing a threat to the western subject. For, paradoxically enough, the object within the visual and epistemic institutionalized space of the museum, gains its value (as an object culled from the margins of the empire) only through references to its threatening thingness. As an object, it represents the anxiety provoking conditions of the colonial space – the 'aboriginal freaks' [Jarwas], who use the poison laced thorn to kill people.

[70] In case of Doyle, as also with Collins, the collision is in-between a past moment constituting an implicit indictment of imperial exploitation and a present moment that acts as a corrective to the past. What marks the two apart is of course the Indian Mutiny. 1857 is the fulcrum organizing, arranging, and explaining imperial history, its trials, tests, leaguers, and successes. The ideological thrust is evident in the way crimes of past are *re*-presented as opposed to being simply represented. I am borrowing the argument from Spivak's discussion of representation as *vertreten* and re-presentation as *darstellen*. See, Spivak, 'Subaltern' 275-79.

[71] See, Pinney 'Creole Europe,' for an interesting discussion on this issue.

Elaine Freedgood, studying Victorian objects in *The Ideas in Things*, notes that objects like Mahogany furniture in *Jane Eyre* or the 'Negro head' tobacco in *Great Expectations* functioned as sites for discursively acknowledging, in most rarefied ways, the horrors perpetrated by imperialism. Some "particularly overwhelming horrors," Freedgood affirms, could not be named, but "only encoded fetishistically" in these objects (Freedgood *Things* 82). The thorn, however, is not a fetish object since its representation of the Other space is direct unlike most fetish objects.[72] The thorn represents the inhuman Tonga, who like his weapon is perilous and "as venomous as a young snake" (Doyle 114). The danger from the thorn is therefore doubly real, the anxiety over its threat palpable and the need for containing it vital. Interestingly, the attempt at controlling the thing through discourse, also expresses the fragility of discourse by reminding readers about the dangers of the object – it is *still* poisoned. And because this metonymic relation to anxieties over the thorn's free and unsupervised circulation is retained, that it achieves the status of an exotic object for the empire.

Discursive practices of suture or metaphorization do not always produce definitive moments for the reconstitution of subjectivity and construction of meaning. In fact, meaning-making, as an imperialist ideological tool, is contingent upon the presence of an anxiety over the dissolution of meaning; an anxiety about an unforeseen collapse haunts the margins of signification and the empire and signification within the empire. The fractured symbolization of the thorn-thing illustrates that. For in organizing the thing as an object through language that labels its essentially alien origin, the intractable outsiderly threat of the thing to the domestic space is conserved within discourse, as well as the material space, say of an Oriental museum.

[72] Relation between a fetish object or "fetishistically encoded object" and what it represents is never direct. The subject's appreciation of the object is founded on the logic that 'this object is not what I desire, but still.' A fetish object is always representing something else, something that is prohibited, and is a substitute object. See Bruce Fink's discussion of a case where button was the fetish object in Fink *Clinical Introduction* 181-185. Also Dor 84-86; Freud 'Fetishism.'

Meaning and/or identity is never stable; the bar that dissociates the signifier from the signified and makes speech possible, also constructs the anxiety over its eventual dissolution – the bar can collapse![73] Meaning and identity are stretched in two different directions – the signifier and jouissance; that is, towards a symbolic sign and the sign as the signature of the real. Schematically put, meaning (metaphor) is contingent upon the presence of the bar segregating meaning from the endless chain of metonymy. The bar delivers meaning at the same time as it inaugurates an anxiety over its possible collapse.[74] Anxiety, in this scheme, represents the anguish of encountering what is beyond the bar, buried or repressed by it, namely, the real or jouissance as a threat to meaning. This gap created at the instance of objectification, the splitting of the word into divergent symbolic and real directions and the consequent production of meaning as an "identity-in-difference," accordingly, does not hermeneutically seal the thorn as an object. Rather, its objectness remains contingent upon its pristine thingness; articulating the impossibility of completely disciplining variables, of sequestering stable meaning, signification, and identity.

The imperial-masterly subject in Doyle, as constructed by discourse, is situated at this limit of knowledge, identity, and discourse. The desire for establishing hegemonic control, which evolves out of the act of representation as a discourse of re-presentation, conspicuously constitutes imperial subjectivity and authority as limited. The subject, like the meaning and discourse it constructs, is split between a fantasy of presumed mastery and the anxiety over failing to decisively enclose the thing within a system of signification.[75] The lack of satisfaction

[73] As Pinney, notes, drawing attention to the tension between objectification and control of things in society, suture "is a model not of the enduring capture and suppression of objects, but rather, of their fleeting habitation within fragile discursive categories from which they seem ready, at any moment, to escape […]" ('Creole Europe' 141).
[74] As Freud's writings show, meaning of a word is never finite, it risks cooption by other nonsensical words creating bridges between the symbolic certainty and the real's nonsensical uncertainty. See the 'Rat-Man' case for instance.
[75] See, Lacan *Encore*. For a discussion of Lacan's theory of sexuation in Seminar XX, see Fink, *Reading Seminar XX*.

thus constituted appears in conscious life as the 'compulsion to repeat,' as the death-drive. The desire for repeatedly representing the object to announce mastery contains the drive towards enjoying its unavoidable contingency, continually. Repetition is not simply about the symbolic assertion of meaning and authority as Bhabha claims, it also involves the drive towards enjoying the impossibility of claiming mastery and producing stable meanings.

Holmes and Murthwaite's respective attempts at objectifying alien things through language are, as I discuss above, not hermeneutically definitive. Their surveying and strategies of containment fail to totalize variables produced as a result of geopolitical traffic between Britain and its colonies. However, their efforts divulge the ideological mechanism for constructing identities and meaning in relation to the symbolic situation of objects within the imperial imaginary. The thorn that retains its threat beyond discourse and the stone that escapes surveillance constitute the Other as partly beyond discourse, beyond intelligence. In the realm of the Other, these dangerous things represent the protocol of the Other's being and desire, their criminal instincts and superstitious beliefs, and exist completely free from the rational scientific grasp of imperial polity. The radical difference of the Other is marked by these alien liminal objects-things. These exemplify the Other in possession of an exclusive jouissance, culture, desire, and habit. What may appear to some as the inherent weakness of imperial discourse to arrest or reproduce fixities, the Other as knowledge and stable, in reality is an ideological strategy to retain a gap within knowledge of the Other in order to qualify the Other's unique mode of being. We must be therefore careful analyzing post-mutiny fiction and the attempts therein for negotiating objects causing anxiety. These negotiations do not aim to expunge anxiety completely; rather, depending upon the context and need, the unnerving thingness of the object is

retained. Anxiety of the object as thing is preserved to keep the imaginary distinction of the Other as different alive.

IV

A Deferred Conclusion: Colonialism as Forced Metaphor

The discussion of object anxiety in historical and literary narratives enables us to inquire now into the relation between the Uprising and anxieties associated with the event. If we agree that the ambivalent sepoy was constituted by the colonial machinery or that the transformation of material objects into things did not in reality entail any *real* physical change, then, perhaps, we may start to derive an argument that situates anxiety at a structural level; a scotoma in the field of imperial knowledge. That is to say, we can begin to speculate that anxiety is inherent to colonialism given the sheer inadequacy of colonial discourse to exhaust the myriad possibilities of the pluralized Other cultural space, and directly connected to the material and epistemic praxis of colonialism.

Lacan's theory of the symbolic order as an order of difference is especially useful for expanding this argument theoretically, since anxieties over the Uprising as I discuss above often revolve around questions of successfully maintaining a stable relationship between a signifier and the signified.[76] The anxiety over maintaining a stable symbolic order constituted a primary concern for the British colonial enterprise in India. Let me explain.

The symbolic order, Lacan tells us, comes into existence following metaphorization; or the significant substitution of one signifier over a metonymic plurality and the grounding of that signifier as knowledge. Lacan stresses that this primary signifier is arbitrary, often brought into existence through force, and knowledge or identity constructed on basis of the signifier is a

[76] The grounding of the signifier (mirror image) to the signified (bodily unity implying mastery) qua the (m)Other is a fundamental act through which the self or ego-identity as well as meaning is formed. See, Lacan, 'Mirror Stage.'

misrecognized knowledge/identity.[77] At one level, the colonial administration was dependent upon knowing the colonial society and culture through a similar act of metaphorization – defining the others as *the* Other by constructing otherness at the level of broad imaginary signifiers of difference. This understanding of colonialism is nothing new. The epistemic construction of the Orient in European thought, as studied by Edward Said, and the various signifiers used to consolidate the image of the Oriental (for example, the despot, the practice of Sati, etc.), as elaborated by Alain Grosrichard and Gayatri Spivak respectively, are cases in point for understanding how the East was constructed as a monolithic Other. What has not been emphasized enough however is that anxiety is a structural condition that inhabits the symbolic order from its very inception. Anxiety is an inextricable part of the colonial experiential space.

Before moving on, I must clarify that this line of argument does not discount the agonistic character of the colonial enterprise by emphasizing colonial regime as a function of signs. There is no doubting that colonialism was erected on procedural agencies responsible for violently dislocating, disenfranchising, and murdering large masses of people. Bureaucratization and technologization of colonial space was aimed both at the splitting the colonized mind and the scarring of the colonized body, thereby turning the colonized into quantifiable, hence controllable, signifiers. This construction of colonized subjectivity entailed a violent extraction of the subject as Other from individualized bodies. This was performed either through physical subduing or by epistemic reconfiguration of individualized cultural habitats or both. Indeed, there is an intimate relation between physical violence and metaphorization as a structural procedure for production of knowledge. And there are enough evidences to choose from.

The Santhal rebellion of 1855-56 is one such example. The rebellion was a reaction against British political, military, and economic expansion into Santhal territories of

[77] See, Lacan *Seminar XVII*.

Chotonagpur plateau. The rebellion was met with brutal counter-insurgency operations that decimated Santhal populations, thereby physically containing them. This violent subduing was accompanied by the production of a highly condemning body of knowledge about the Santhal as a tribe and as individuals. Their culture, society, and religious practices were identified as dangerous and pronounced uncivilized. The tribal practice of witch-hunting, for instance, was extracted from its particular cultural context and forced into representations of the Santhals as a barbaric tribe. The desire to militarily contain in effect merged with the desire to reform, save, and emancipate the Santhals leading to the justification of maintaining British troops as well as for sending missionaries to the region.[78] As Rachel Standfield rightly summarizes, violence was the first step towards setting up an archive for 'reading' the Other and reducing them to fit the existent information of the archives (Standfield 35). Epistemic reconfigurations of the colonial space and its peoples therefore did not function independent of and/or in spite of the material reconstructions of the colonial space as carried out by the colonial regime. In fact, it is the uncomfortable association between the two that, as I will show, is primarily responsible for the surfacing of anxiety within the colonial experiential space.

Metaphorization or 'forced metaphorization' I think is a better term for explaining the tendency in European colonialism to rationalize and scientize territorial colonization. My use of the adjective 'forced' follows Said's argument to mean (1) produced with exertion, artifice, and pressure; and, (2) produced through forcing or via established power structures (Said *Orientalism* 5-6; 21). But the term metaphor, in my opinion, extends Said's primary argument in *Orientalism*

[78] Interestingly, during 1857 Uprising the Chotonagpur tribals reacted against British laws banning witch-hunts by organizing mass witch-hunts. For an interesting reading of what may have been first occasion of mass witch-hunts organized by the tribals and its relation to 1857, gender, and colonial rule, see Sinha, 'In Search of Alternative Histories of 1857,' 213-225; also, for a background on the Uprising in the region, see Sinha, 'On the Margins of a "National" Uprising,' 120-142. Another good example of how the physical body and polyphonic cultural systems inhabited by that body are reduced to the level of signifiers, in the Indian context, is the eight volume *People of India* series. The *Census* and 'Criminal Tribes' list also served similar purposes.

regarding the displaced nature of the construction – the Orient as a "created consistency" – by emphasizing the cut that separates the real from the artificial (ibid. 5). This cut, as Said and others have shown, is crucial for understanding how power relations operate within Orientalism by drawing upon imaginary discourses that are introduced to fill in the gap between the "regular constellation of ideas as the pre-eminent thing about the Orient" and the "mere [heterogeneous] being" of the Orient (Said *Orientalism* 5-6; 21). In my understanding, this cut is also important for another thing – it is responsible for producing anxiety. Following Said's argument, we can say that at an imaginary level, colonial discourse consolidates the Other as different from the self. But at a more symbolic level, the gap that opens up between the "idea" of the Orient and the Orient as a reality, and the signifiers that are repressed in the process of constructing the Orient, produces anxiety. Anxiety over the presence of this haunting gap and a possible *return* of repressed signifiers find its descriptive presence through the necessity of continuously repeating mastery over the colonized (Bhabha 'Mimicry' 121-131). This anxiety, whenever realized, also forces the colonizer to act violently, as in the case of the Mutiny, thus withdrawing the veil of historical and reformist justifications from the face of colonialism. This shredding of the veil is paradoxically responsible for anxiety. As the colonizer confronts the excruciating reality of colonialism as a violent and oppressive force, far distant from its claims about civilization and reform, he is beset with anxiety (See, Fanon *Wretched* 264-267). It is the tenuous relation between colonialism as discourse and colonialism as a ruthless exploitative system that constitutes anxiety as a structural condition at the very moment when territorial occupation of the Other's land is presented through discourse as Historical duty.

In a Lacanian sense, this dynamics can be explained as the move from the classical position of power/Master (absolute monarchy) to the position of the University/knowledge

(capitalism). That is, from the articulation of obscene irrational authority over the Other to the situation of that articulation within a system of objective knowledge, hence justifying the claim as based on and supported by law, knowledge, and history (Lacan *Seminar XVII*).[79] Following Zizek, we can identify the first moment, (S1), as one of those "instance[s] of 'irrational' authority," which the Enlightenment project sought to override, and the second moment, (S2), as the moment of "bureaucratization of knowledge" (Zizek *Enjoyment* 235-36). It is this move and rephrasing (S1 to S2) co-terminus with 'modern' colonialism that I am calling forced metaphorization. This process of veiling the reality of colonial enterprise through imaginary discourses was pragmatic in its expediency for arranging modalities of political governance and psychologically necessary for defining the superiority of the self by homogenizing the Other.[80] In other words, colonialism is predicated upon knowledge structures that *represent* a primal, obscene, and irrational moment of assertion.[81] Colonialism constitutes the moment when raw power is rephrased as knowledge/power; knowledge supplying the colonizer with the

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[79] Lacan writes the Master's discourse as $\frac{S1}{\$} \rightarrow \frac{S2}{a}$ and University discourse as: $\frac{S2}{S1} \rightarrow \frac{a}{\$}$.
The four positions correspond with: $\frac{\text{Agency}}{\text{Truth}} \rightarrow \frac{\text{Knowledge}}{\text{Loss}}$; or as $\frac{\text{Master Signifier}}{\text{subject}} \rightarrow \frac{\text{knowledge}}{\text{Jouissance}}$.
Interestingly, Lacan locates this shift historically as coterminous with the emergence of capitalist market systems in Europe.

[80] Thomas Metcalf's claim that the period before rigorous scientific systems were employed to "order and classify" India's difference as an articulation of difference only through "mere assertion," is at once similar to my point and different from it. See, Metcalf 66-67. The designation of the Other as different through "mere assertion," of course, constitutes the moment, I term, S1. But, to say that only following James Mill "scientific structures" were used to justify and rationalize the assertion, is to ignore that even William Jones's discourses carried, or claimed, scientific support. In fact, "mere assertion" as the 'founding word' with which the Other is first distanced, does not belong to the epistemological and historical moment of colonialism – it precedes colonialism and should be understood in terms of an originary fantasy of the Other.

[81] It is the return of what had been repressed – the "return of the repressed"– that contributes, amongst other things, to the anxiety over the event; the object as thing resurrects that (*das Ding* or the Thing) which should have been dead and buried. Repressed is a better term to explain the effect of metaphorization than foreclosed. Since the latter does not recognize metaphorization as arbitrary or forced. Repression is itself a symptom of the fact that metaphorization is an obligatory act – the need to construct a unified Other as completely different from the self was crucial for the project of colonialism. It is at the heart of the ethical and moral justifications given by colonialists in the name of religion or Enlightenment. Freud's essay on the "Uncanny" also helps to understand the agency of known objects transforming into things in relation to anxiety and knowledge.

responsibility of carrying out the historically necessary duty of civilizing the Other but the repression of reality circumscribing the colonizer with anxiety.

The singularity of 1857 Uprising vis-à-vis its impact on British cultural memory comes from its disruption of this logic of imperial signifiers and signification. The Mutiny brings to light not only the ideological expediency of creating the Orient as an artificial consistency, but it also explains how this construction introduces into the colonial experiential space a haunting anxiety. The trauma of the event, its repeated articulation in cultural memory and the brutality of British retaliation in the aftermath of the Uprising are symptoms of this disruption, indicative of the need for continuous resymbolization of the fractured colonial space through force and remembrance.[82] The Uprising, more than anything, materialized into imperial consciousness the essential gap that structures the colonial vision as lacking and incomplete.[83]

[82] Kate Teltscher's essay on the 'Black Hole' is a good example of how this phenomenon of recuperating trauma through material memorialization and cultural memorization can be read. See, Teltscher.

[83] In centering the mind, I am following upon recent suggestions made by historians of the Mutiny, that the relation between the event and cultural psychology must be investigated in greater critical detail. After all, as Peter Robb puts it, the "material consequences [of the Mutiny] were minor by comparison with its impact on the mind" (60). See, Robb 'On the Rebellion of 1857' 59-79. Other historians, including Dipesh Chakraborty and Sekhar Bandyopadhyay have also noted this. See their essays in *1857: Essays from Economic and Political Weekly*. As historian Biswamoy Pati acknowledges, Robb "directs our attention to an area [i.e. the impact of 1857 on the mind] that is normally ignored." See, Pati 35.

CHAPTER II

Scandals of the State: Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* and the Historical Contexts of 1857.

"The declaration that the Raj [of Tanjore] was extinct […] was the pretext of rapacity [and the] seizing upon all the property [of Tanjore and its queens] unparalleled in the history of modern civilization […] a story of this kind, related to a Roman proconsul, would provoke the most vehement outburst of Christian indignation against pagan morality, while perpetrated by a Christian government, it deserves the reprobation of the world. Do you think that India will be governed peacefully, while wrongs so unheard of are inflicted upon her people? […] it would be a disgrace to us as Englishmen and as Christian men [to] approve them."

[*Bombay Times*, 20 August 1859, IOR/H 726].

"I naturally set the English on the throne of my heart. Thus passed the first chapters of my life. Then came the parting of ways accompanied with a painful feeling of disillusion when I began increasingly to discover how easily those who accepted the highest truths of civilisation disowned and violated them with impunity driven by their baser instincts […] I could never have remotely imagined that the great ideals of humanity would end in such ruthless travesty. Never thought I would encounter such cruel and perverted deportment of civilized self's. But today a glaring example of it stares me in the face in the utter and contemptuous indifference of a so-called civilized race to the well-being of crores [millions] of Indian people."

[Tagore, 'Sabhyatar Sankat' *RR* 26: 635-637].[84]

[84] A note on my translation: I have closely followed the translation of the Bengali essay as 'Crisis in Civilisation,' in *Crisis in Civilisation and Other Essays*. I have however made a couple of necessary and important changes. I am claiming the above translation as mine for that reason. The changes: (1) Where the existing translation reads "questions of national self-interest," it ignores Tagore's use of the word *ripu*. This is a critical mistake. Though somewhat similar to the notion of sin, *ripu* or *Sararipu*, since there are 6 *ripus*, should be regarded as instincts. As such, these can be used in good or bad ways. Sin is different. In Sanskrit and Bengali, *paap* not *ripu* means Sin. The 6 *ripus* are *Kama*, *krodh, moho, himsa, lobh, matsarya*, or sexual desire, anger, infatuation (material), violence, greed, and excess. (2) The translation in *Crisis in Civilisation and Other Essays* does not refer to Tagore's use of the words *Nishthur* or cruel and *Bikrito* or perverted or demented, words which, in the Bengali original, characterize British disposition.

I

In chapter 1, I argued how material objects in mutiny narratives function as "evocative objects," raising anxieties over indigenous insurrections and acting as sites for discursively (*re*)asserting imperial sovereignty. To follow Sherry Turkle's general definition, evocative objects stir up thoughts, ideas, and affects and connect divided persons, spaces, memories, and differences at large (*Evocative* 3-10, 307-326). These objects, importantly for my purposes here, by inhabiting a liminal domain between consciousness and the unconscious act as material conduits between emotions and thoughts, reappraising buried affects and *re*-presenting them in thought. Elaine Freedgood in *The Idea in Things* and, more recently, John Plotz in *Portable Property* have studied a range of such evocative objects in Victorian literature.

In an age of heightened "global" traffic of material commodities, physical bodies, and cultural mores, objects, notes Plotz, served the empire new ways to (re)-imagine "community, national identity, and even liberal selfhood on the move" (*Portable* xii-xiv). Material objects were not merely commodities with market value but tokens of "enduring Englishness" for Victorians both home and abroad. "[P]ortaging of sentiment in beloved objects" and the "need to develop auratic [and] somatic […] forms of storing personal and familial memories" through (portable) objects, explains Plotz, was "a predictable, even a necessary, development in a world of increasingly successful commodity flow" (17). Yet, representations of objects that announce respite from alien culture and attachment to homeland possible also paradoxically fracture such imaginaries. According to Plotz, this is evident in "diamond tales as nowhere else" because diamonds in Victorian culture are always stretched between their emotional value and utilitarian/market value and between metropolitan desire for consumption and an awareness

regarding colonial modes of production/extraction.[85] As things, diamonds vitiate Victorian cultural consciousness as "limit cases at which our ordinary categories for classifying signs and substances, meaning and materiality, appear to breakdown" (25). In their "persistent refusal to turn either into pure liquidity or pure bearers of sentimental value," diamonds occupy "troubling intersections between clear categories" thereby distorting identities formed around them (ibid.). Plotz's analysis of Collins's masterpiece, *The Moonstone*, shows exactly how flow and counter-flow of objects in the age of empire exacerbated the tension between diamonds as fungible objects and diamonds as sentimental possessions. For unlike Anthony Trollope's *Eustace Diamonds* where the problematic around the precious necklace is grounded in the legality of exchange versus sentimental possession of the heirloom, in Collins's novel it is the evocative resonance of the moonstone as a "portable metonym for India" that contributes to the volatile character of the stone and vexes human relations around it:

> The Indian origin of the jewel means that (all domestic intrigues and gambling debts aside) the terror associated with the mysterious followers of the jewel is redoubled by all the fiscal and military unease associated with imperial rule over India (40).

The stone's checkered history – its evocation of the traumatic memories of the Indian Mutiny and the threat it poses to the collective peace and tranquility of the English home – makes it a liminal object *par excellence*. Moreover, as loot, it is not a legal personal possession open to exchange nor an object around which sentimental attachment can be formed without incurring serious risk of bodily harm from those who claim the stone as their own, the Indian Brahmins.

[85] Freedgood argues that this is most generally the case in Victorian object culture – objects remind the Victorian consumers of the horrors of colonial production yet the consumer finds it difficult to stop using these objects. As a result, consumer consciousness split these objects, making them thus into fetish objects. In Lacanian phraseology, the Victorian consumer says 'I know but still…'

This constitutive duality of the object erects a barrier against the seamless assimilation of the Blood Diamond into the flow of cash/capital as much as it vitiates circulation of sentiments around it. *The Moonstone* conveys anxiety over "portability in reverse," of Indian bodies and traumatic colonial memories "making it to England unscathed" (43).

Plotz's discussion of the moonstone as a liminal object or thing brings to surface a number of critical issues especially the problematic creation of and univocal subjective appreciation of differenced meanings, identities, spaces, and history in the novel. Insofar as Plotz's discussions regarding the uncanny affinity between "domestic and external desires" for the stone, anxieties over reverse geo-political traffic, and the threat presented by a dangerous Oriental occult object are concerned, this chapter has nothing to add (41-44). But a critical lacuna, if there is one, has to be the absence of any connection between Plotz's arguments and the 1857 Uprising. In spite of beginning his discussion of the novel with a reference to the Indian Mutiny, Plotz does not expand his arguments to investigate or theorize possible intersections between the Uprising and Collins's plot. My goal here is to focus on the relationship between the Mutiny and the novel.[86] Focusing closely on the moonstone and the construction of the character of Mr. Murthwaite around it, I will study the multiform exigencies characterizing Collins's

[86] It would be a mistake to say he ignores the significance of the Mutiny, for from time to time he does refer it. To cite one instance, while discussing how the stone was apprehended as cursed or encapsulating some Oriental supernatural power thoroughly disruptive of domestic tranquility, Plotz refers to ideas in circulation within mid- and late- nineteenth century England about Oriental magic, occult, and "uncanny methods of communication and […] telepathic rapport" practiced by the natives. He refers to accounts from the mid 60s that asserted "[i]mportant news travels faster in India by Mental Telegraph than by Electric Telegraph," or presence of Indian "Secret Mail" in the subcontinent (See, Plotz 41-42; 199-200n64).Yet, it does not strike him that these accounts from the 1860s and 1880s enunciating anxiety over indigenous means of communication and correspondence as a challenge to the Empire are directly related to concerns which first emerged during the Mutiny. The rumors of indigenous communication pursued by the sepoys by circulating *chapattis*, lotus flowers, chipped pieces of animal bones, *lotahs* through innocuous mendicants, monks, *fakirs* and vagrants emerged during the Uprising. These objects, like the rumours about them, were never verifiable, never existing outside of rumors and are thus things. I discuss in my chapter 1 some of these things and their relation to anxiety. See also, Kaye's observation on indigenous 'electric' communication, in Kaye I: 491. Plotz also overlooks a number of Mutiny novels that have identifiable subplots around stolen/looted diamonds or jewels. *The Dilemma* (1876) written by George Chesney is an interesting example. See my discussion of the novel below.

strategic re-presentations of the Uprising in the novel through the mediation of a material (liminal) object, the moonstone.

Some Preliminary Questions Relating to *The Moonstone*

I have argued in my introduction that diverse representations of anxieties associated with the Uprising in British imagination, *inter alia*, reveal a single central anxiety over the collapse of the colonial symbolic imaginary. Representations of the Mutiny are symptoms of this singular anxiety. And as symptoms, mutiny narratives function as either "cipher [s] of some repressed meaning" or as sites of "non-delivered meaning," or both (Zizek 'Proper' 261; Miller 'Paradigms'). Stated anxieties over physical destruction of the empire from indigenous rebellion conceal concerns about the collapse of subjective and national fantasies of power and provenance. These concerns often remain trapped within discursive articulations of imperial authority and identity; their presence marked only by the resultant condition of repetition. As Brantlinger's essay 'The Well at Cawnpore: Literary Representations of the Indian Mutiny of 1857' shows, the mutiny never faded out of British imagination. Mutiny fictions constructed and reconstructed same themes, derived from historical sources and revised to suit immediate contexts, to weave sensational yarns of contingency and loss for the express desire of arriving at restitution of order, identity, and hegemony. They shuttle between mastery and contingency, and endless rehearsings of mastery over contingency. In their 'pedagogic performativity,' these narratives recreate through the decades the event as a lay dramaturgy documenting histories of the Uprising and reclaiming terrorized imperial from within that history.[87] In what follows, I show how Collins's novel fits this map of mutiny narratives in spite of not being a mutiny fiction in the strict sense of the term.

[87] For 'pedagogic performativity,' see Bhabha *Location of Culture* and *Nation and Narration*.

The absence of any direct reference in Collins's novel to the Mutiny, at one level, can be thought of as "calculated to drain [any and all] historical specificity" pertaining to the Empire or 1857.[88] Yet it is easily identifiable as a product of the decade when memories of the event were fresh and anxieties over another uprising a constant source of imperial discomfort. The post-Mutiny decade of the 1860s witnessed a growth in discourses speculative of possible ways for apprehending dissent in the colonies. Many were in favor of creating ingenious capillaries of panoptical control for keeping the natives under constant surveillance, while others demanded measures that were more pragmatic. Collins's novel being uniquely liminal – the novelistic universe is separated from the historical time of the Uprising yet markedly evocative of post-Mutiny concerns – offers an excellent opportunity to analyze how anxieties about the Mutiny and issues of colonial control were *re*-presented through cultural texts in the immediate aftermath of the revolt. My reading and analysis of the novel will pursue two distinct though not mutually exclusive lines of argument. First, I will note the connection between anxieties over the moonstone as a looted property and concerns over the actions of the British counter-insurgency brigades during the 1857 Uprising. The 'story' of the looted stone, I will argue, stirred up memories of the atrocities committed by British counter-insurgency operations in the name of retributive justice. These memories, I will go onto claim, shaped anxieties over incandescent illustrations of British profligacy in the colony during the rebellion and caused alarm in the post-Mutiny atmosphere of self-introspection and self-criticism.[89] Second, I will extrapolate a completely new reading of the character Mr. Murthwaite to present an *exposé* of the novel's

[88] I am echoing here of course Benita Parry's comment about the exclusions of the colonial context from Sandison's *The Wheel of Empire* (1967). The work, Parry notes, has a mythic approach "calculated to drain the writings [of the imperial period] of historical specificity" (qtd. in Moore-Gilbert 22-23).

[89] I will however not touch upon anxiety provoking events happening outside the subcontinent, like the Governor Eyre controversy, limiting myself to a discussion of only the Mutiny and Anglo-Indian concerns over it. For the Governor Eyre controversy and its relation to Collins's novel, see, Sabin.

ideological complicity with post-Mutiny imperialist thinking. I will do this by situating Murthwaite within an elaborated historical context. I will present Murthwaite as a strategic ideological construction; as one responsible for successfully rendering indigenous society transparent.

John Reed's in his 1973 essay, 'English Imperialism and the Unacknowledged Crime of *The Moonstone*,' famously wrote that Collins's novel represents "unacknowledged crime[s]" of the empire and that it "is a national and not personal guilt that is in question in this novel, and national rather than individual values that are tested" (288). Since then postcolonial analysis of the narrative has opened up a debate regarding the text's exact ideological function.[90] Ashis Roy and Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee, for instance, have shown that unlike what Reed says the novel operates within typical parameters of colonial discourse. The novel presents a "*mythos* entirely consonant with arguments for empire" through programmed semiological ruptures situated at the "intersection of its Indian and English plots," notes Roy (657). For Roy, Murthwaite is the central figure in the narrative. It is through his agency that imperial sovereignty is restored at the end of the work. Roy identifies an implicit promotion of Murthwaite against Colonel Herncastle or Ablewhite. The isolation and excision of the latter two, he says, is a sign of self-conscious refusal to accept abusive colonials, and the characterization of Murthwaite a reimagination of a discrete imperial subjectivity in their stead.

Lillian Nayder has countered postcolonial critique of the novel by drawing attention to Collins's willingness "to imagine […] an alliance between the members of an imperial underclass and those of a subject race" (*Unequal* 104). She identifies this "willingness to

[90] Margery Sabin tries to move outside of the debate and focus on the novel's attempt to negotiate with colonial guilt through "oblivion […] as a remedy for colonial and other kinds of ethical distress" (81). In recent years, interrogation of the relation of the novel with the issues of 'domestic' class and gender politics has also been done. See, Carens.

imagine" an alliance of 'subaltern' classes and races in the novel through Collins's sympathetic treatments of Limping Lucy, the Indian Brahmins, and the little English child 'adapted' by the Brahmins.[91] Nayder argues that compared to Dickens, Collins's understanding and treatment of the colonial question is "marked by distinct ideological and 'political differences'" (103).[92] The problem with Nayder's view is her glossing over the question of subalterneity. As Gayatri Spivak explains, dialogue between persons inhabiting the margins of the domestic society and those in the colony cannot take place outside of the imperial fantasy or without committing a series of epistemic violence against the colonized subaltern.[93] I therefore side with Roy and Mukherjee in the ongoing debate over the novel's ideological function. Yet, I do not think either of them sufficiently investigate the role of Murthwaite (in addition, to that of Ezra Jennings) and the evocative potency of the moonstone in context of Victorian socio-political culture in the period of, what Thomas Metcalf calls, the 'aftermath of the revolt.' Because, all said and done, one cannot ignore that *The Moonstone* was written at a historically tense and anxious moment. Apart from the haunting memory of the recent Mutiny in India, there was an anxiety over a foreign invasion of the subcontinent led by Russia in alliance with Afghanistan and regional discontents. (This anxiety surfaced during the Indian Mutiny through rumors about foreign instigation etc.) The novel, I think it is safe to speculate, reminded its Victorian readers a slew of

[91] Similarly, reference can be made here to his 'A Sermon to the Sepoys' written in 1857 that attempts to enter into a dialogue with the rebellious sepoys in their native 'language' thereby expressing the author's conviction in possibility of dialogue with the sepoys in stark contrast to majority of his countrymen including Dickens's who called for annihilation of the natives *en masse*.

[92] Ashis Roy and Upamanyu Mukherjee, though belonging to the opposite side of the divide from Nayder agree with her claim about Collins's sympathy for dispossessed classes when they assert that the sensitive portrayal of Ezra Jennings distinguishes the novel from other works of the period. Roy admits, "there is some slippage even in [the] fine [imperialist] semiotic scheme [of Collins's novel] which circulates culturally intolerable ruptures only to rediscover them as the currency of tolerance." In spite of the novel's blatant alignment with conventional imperialist tendencies, Roy finds Ezra Jennings as the "final authority" (673). Mukherjee similarly explicates the connection between the novel and nineteenth century imperialism, but finds Jennings's character as a sympathetic deviation.

[93] Apart from the famous essay by Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' I also have in mind her essay 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism' and her recent book, *Other Asias*. I return to this issue later in this chapter, first, while historically contextualizing the status of the moonstone as loot, and then, again while discussing the position of Ezra Jennings in Collins's narrative.

anxieties – the recent mutiny in India, colonial misadventures by British agents, the specter of Russian expansion in the East etc. A rereading of the novel in context of the anxious climate of the 1860s is therefore crucial for explicating the full ideological import of the work.

Before entering into a reading of the novel, it has to be acknowledged that situating Collins and the novel as either imperialist or anti-imperialist is indeed a difficult task. Rigid classifications, as Nayder's or Roy's, cannot adequately sum up the complexities of a novel that is overarchingly a product of an ideological conflict within Collins. Collins cannot be classified either as a hardliner demanding the thorough subjugation of the colonies or as condemning imperialism totally. Collins's was, like many Victorians of his day, an imperialist without knowing. He shared with many educated intellectuals of his time, both in India and Britain, a belief in the benefits of colonialism if pursued responsibly.[94] Consequently, it is around the issue of responsibility – its failure and its possible reconstitution – that, I believe, Collins's novel should be re-read. Characterized by articulation of this *simultaneity* of thinking, Collins's novel stretches between speech and its absence, between signification and repression of meaning, between desire and 'signifiantisation by other means' of concerns evoked by the moonstone qua the Mutiny. Confronted by this peculiar nature of the narrative, my own critical method for reading the novel depends on connecting signification with what falls off the textual map. In other words, by short-circuiting conscious representations and repressed/elided meanings, and by linking the fictional representation of Murthwaite to a larger historical canvas that has remained largely ignored in contemporary critical evaluations. The two lines of argument I pursue – the moonstone as an object evoking anxieties about the Mutiny and Murthwaite as a fantasy of

[94] See for example his 'Sermon to the Sepoys.' Written at a moment when most people in England demanded the complete annihilation of the rebelling natives in India, Collins's text offers a different opinion. Collins's calls upon the need for engaging the sepoys in a dialogue, explaining and resolving issues through instructing the discontent sepoys in a language and idiom they are most familiar with than imposing British strictures. I cannot discuss this text for lack of space. See, Nayder for an interesting discussion of the 'Sermon.'

surveillance – attempt to restitute and rely on overlooked, elided, or marginalized historical contexts as most significant for discovering the relation of the novel to its historical context.[95]

II

What is it?

"What is It?," Penelope asks her father Gabriel Betteredge, the old butler of Verinder household, after she overhears three Indian juggler's suspiciously debating whether the Englishman [Franklin Blake] had 'It' on him. The 'It,' of course, is the accursed moonstone, the diamond (Collins 42). But, as Betteredge avows, the diamond is much more than a stone.

> [I]t *was* a Diamond [but] When you looked down into the stone, you looked into a yellow deep that drew your eyes into it so that they saw nothing else. It seemed unfathomable; this jewel, that you could hold between your finger and thumb, seemed unfathomable as the heavens themselves. We set it in the sun, and then shut the light out of the room, and it shone awfully out of the depths of its own brightness […] (Collins 74).

Like the Heideggerian 'jug,' the stone is an "independent, self-supporting thing" (Heidegger 'Thing' 164), gathering and representing an entirely different existential, cosmological, and historical system around its material being, and both attracting and obfuscating the rationalizing imperial gaze. Though easily held between a "finger and thumb," it is "unfathomable" and difficult to describe. Split between its materiality as a yellow stone and its mysterious "deep,"

[95] I borrow the notion of short-circuiting as a method of critical reading from Slavoj Zizek. Zizek explains this as "the most effective critical [procedure] to cross wires that do not usually touch: to take a major classic (text, author, notion), and read it in a short-circuiting way, through the lens of a 'minor' author, text, or conceptual apparatus ('minor' should be understood here in Deleuze's sense: not 'of lesser quality,' but marginalized, disavowed by hegemonic ideology, or dealing with a 'lower,' less dignified topic) [and] If the minor reference is well chosen, such a procedure can lead to insights which completely shatter and undermine our common perceptions" (Zizek 'Series Foreword' n.a). Neither 1857 nor the post-57 colonial-political history is a minor event. What makes it conceptually and textually marginal is Collins's deliberate skirting of this history and the failure of critical scholarship to reintroduce it in critical detail as context into readings of Collins's novel. Hence, my effort to resuscitate overlooked histories (1857 and post-1857) and bring them to bear on a reading of Collins's narrative and elaborate the context of the novel.

between being a mere diamond and a signifier of colonial violence, the moonstone is not a simple object but a thing. It resists, challenges, and problematizes imperial gaze, appreciation, and knowledge after and by bringing the domestic and the colonial into uncomfortable proximity.[96]

This imperial impotency to fathom the mysterious stone mirrors frustrations experienced during and following the Mutiny in the absence of any adequate knowledge of and means for knowing the indigene society – "their motives, their secrets, their animosities, their aspirations" behind the rebellion (qtd. Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny* 156). The stone resembles ambiguous objects like the *chapattis* and lotahs around which the administration suspected the Mutiny organized its peculiar dynamics. Without any knowledge about "Native Indian society beyond its merest externals," circulations of such objects were interpreted by the wary administration as ominous signs of an impending danger invisible to their untrained eyes.[97] Like the dislocated and disposable objects floating without censure through Anglo-Indian society and military barracks in 1857, the moonstone and the Brahmins pursuing it, too, appear and disappear haunting the pristine beatitude of the English countryside. The moonstone as an evocative object opens up anxiety over the breach between native society and colonial authority. More importantly, the status of the moonstone as loot discloses another more intimate breach – this time in the very foundation of colonialism as the liberal responsibility of the white Man. The diamond as loot is a

[96] I am tempted to note here the uncanny resemblance between the moonstone and the Marabar Caves in E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India*. Though the stone and the caves are not similar objects, their status as metaphorical representatives of the ambivalent and dangerous colonial space within respective texts is similar. The descriptions of the caves in Forster's text is also similar – its pits the colonizer in an uncomfortable position, unable to either distance the lure of the caves or fathom its mysteries. The caves like the stone enjoy a primeval character.

[97] Kaye in his concluding remarks at the end of his analysis of the causes of the Rebellion says, "We know so little of the Native Indian society beyond its merest externals, the colour of the people's skins, the form of their garments, the outer aspects of their houses, that History, whilst it states broad results, can often only surmise causes […] It is a fact, that there is a certain description of news, which travels in India, from one station to another, with a rapidity almost electric" (Kaye I: 491). Murthwaite, of course with his long training, easily detects in the wandering Indians what others cannot, a point I will soon highlight.

converging point for concerns relating to colonial history as a history of injustices perpetrated by a nation claiming to be progressive, modern, and liberal on an oppressed Other. The stone as a signifier of loot implicates imperial history as a history of violence and gross injustices carried out on inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent.

To return to Penelope's question, it is actually far easier to say what the stone is not. The moonstone is not a "fortune of war" collected 'legally' by a prize agent on behalf of a victorious army. Moreover, its status as prize object is complicated, since it never belonged to Tipu Sultan after whose defeat in the fourth Anglo-Mysore war Colonel Herncastle 'claimed' possession of the stone. The stone was looted private property belonging to the Hindus all along. Independent of the fact of proprietorship, Herncastle's looting of the stone from Tipu's treasury also constitutes a violation of nineteenth century military law. Consequently, the stone continually reminds its readers, rejoicing "in the blessings of the British constitution," of Herncastle's criminal act thus rendering collective re-presentation of the diamond as anything other than loot impossible (Collins 46).

The issue of ethical action during war or national-military emergency is strictly tied to what military law permits during war and concerns over suspension of civil rights and liberties during such emergencies. Herncastle's devious violations (murder and looting) constitute a problem in relation to both. He violates military law and his brutality breaks down British claims about liberal responsible governance of the colonies. Most importantly, Herncastle's actions bring under scrutiny the declaration of emergency during the Uprising – the government's censure of the free press and public retributive trials of the natives – exposing vitally the precariousness of British regime in India.[98]

[98] The emergency, of course, was an announcement of the failure of the administration to overcome the outbreak without recoursing to terror. It was, as well, an official endorsement for carrying out indiscriminate brutalities

Within a historical context, then, Herncastle's act can only occupy a place in the synchronic history of brutal conquests of the subcontinent, thereby compromising British claims about their colonialism as different or as aimed towards liberating colonized subjects from oppressive history. Within a narrower context, Herncastle's looting of the stone in gross violation of British military Law represents an effrontery to the ideals of civilized military behavior of a freethinking tolerant nation. It is therefore only natural that the stone should escape "collective re-presentation" as an object, commodity, or trophy. Indistinguishable as an object, it exists within English society as a 'smear,' an unsymbolizable irritant upsetting the symbolic structures of the domestic space, national identities, and imaginary histories. The consequent anxiety over the stone's thingness and the corresponding impossibility of containing it through collective representation or cognition remains as a tension within the text. This tension persists as an "internal dialogue" within authorial intention, readerly experience, and the text. In the latter, it reveals itself through gaps between the said and the unsaid; what is claimed and actions that fail to follow up on it in reality. Fissures of this order dot the novel as signs of repression. In order to study these fissures, I will now turn to the immediate historical context of the 1860's – a period of transitionality for the British empire endeavoring to (re)conceive itself as a liberal, modern, progressive, and tolerant state – and nineteenth century military law.[99]

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against Indians, all of whom were accused of being rebels. As Rudrangshu Mukherjee reminds British apologists, "[t]hrough a series of Acts – numbers VIII, XI, XIV, and XVI of 1857 (all passed in May-June) – something much more than martial law was imposed all over north India [giving] individual Britons the right to judge and take the life of Indians without recourse to the due processes of law" (180). See, Mukherjee 'The Kanpur Massacres.' See also, 'Revolt of the Native Army: Measures Adopted for the Punishment of Mutineers, Deserters and Rebels,' IOR, Board's Collection, No. 191546, dated December 11, 1857.

[99] The Proclamation issued by Queen Victoria in 1858 set the tone for the pursual of a liberal agenda in the administration of the colony [India]. See, *FSUP* for the text of the Queen's Proclamation. The question of tolerance within imperial discourse gained immediate significance following the Mutiny, which was explained as a reaction of the Indian masses against interventionist policies of the Company and missionaries in India. While this explanation described the Mutiny as a conflict of Indian conservative religious traditions versus Western modernity, it also advocated a reversal of administrative policies that aimed to reform and restructure Indian society. For an overview, see Metcalf *Aftermath*. The debates around liberalism were of course much older than the Proclamation. See, Metcalf *Ideologies*, Mehta *Liberalism*.

Scandals of the State

The moonstone as loot, metaphorically, represents the ideological crisis inaugurated by reports of similar instances of looting during counter-insurgency actions undertaken by British troops during and following the Uprising. In addition, the stone's indirect invocation of the issue of prize money refers, in turn, to two other crucial issues of the day. First, the disenchantment of the British public over the delay and the lack of transparency in the distribution of prize money collected during the Mutiny, and, second, the question of ethics and individual action during war, rebellion, and other national crises. Both issues came to the foreground through contemporary debates around war booty violations in the aftermath of the Mutiny.[100] In order to understand them, one must look at nineteenth century military law and the issue of prize money within it. During the 1860's, controversies and scandals surrounding indiscriminate looting, torture of Indians, and distribution (or lack of it) of prize money seized during the Mutiny accosted British pride, prestige, and dignity. In looking at these discourses, we can glimpse how the vaunted edifice of British liberty, equality, and civilization empties out revealing the ugly face of colonialism as built upon only greed, exploitation, and religio-cultural racism. One of the most affective results of the Mutiny was this unveiling and the inauguration of a 'crisis of belief' in colonialism.

Appropriation of movable properties of enemies, enemy states, and/or neutrals by victorious armies in battle was commonly known as war booty or prize money in the nineteenth century.[101] G.G. Phillimore in a 1901 article titled 'Booty of War' explains, "all hostile movable

[100] Interestingly, the issue of ethics is most centrally located in the text qua Rachel Verinder's refusal to identify Blake as the thief. It is echoed again in her decision to break off the engagement with Godfrey Ablewhite in a roundabout way. This is however beyond the scope of my present research, but it is an important point to keep in mind when discussing the question of ethics in the novel.

[101] Booty originally referred to objects seized in naval warfare but by the nineteenth century, it was often used interchangeably to designate enemy property confiscated in land war as well.

property, public or private, is liable to seizure and appropriation by a belligerent" as prize money or war booty (214). However, under no circumstances (including storming of cities and forts) were "pillage or plunder or appropriation of hostile private property by individuals for their own purposes" allowed (215). These regulations regarding appropriation of enemy property was first made into a law in England in 1832, following the controversy and scandal over the Deccan Prize money. *The Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Land Warfare* states:

> In Britain the distribution of prize money for the army was regulated by an act of Parliament in 1832. Earlier there had been squabbles about who was or was not entitled to the shares; perhaps the most celebrated concerned the Deccan Prize at the conclusion of the Third Maratha War (664).

Passed during the height of the first Reform Bill, the war booty/prize money regulation act of 1832 sought to control the distribution of prize money or amounts realized through confiscated properties to the soldiers of the victorious sovereign. In tune with the growing liberalization of the state, the prize money act like its more famous sibling, the First Reform Act, attempted to cement a liberal democratic modern state – chastising immoral and unethical acts by individuals and the nation as a whole in both peace and war. It categorically established the deposition of prize money as a "matter entirely within the discretion of the sovereign" and declared, "all acquisitions by soldiers in war (and *à fortiori*, private individuals) ensue to the benefit of the sovereign whose agents they are." The law strongly condemned the "appropriation by individuals of enemy's property" without "permission of their sovereign" and designated soldiers as "only instruments which he [the sovereign] employs in asserting his right" (Phillimore 215-216). What had for long been regarded a divine right for victorious armies was made part of a liberal-democratic State legislation via the legislative Act in 1832. The soldiers rights on prize

money were not curtailed, but its procurement and distribution were systematized in such a way as to reflect the Empire as civilizationally enlightened.

During the Mutiny, however, the law was openly flouted. Indiscriminate murdering and looting of natives by the British soldiers forced officials like R. Simson, an under-secretary to the Government of India Foreign Department, to complain that the "state of things as existing in Delhi […] if correctly reported, is calculated to cast the heaviest reproach on the British name" (*Mutiny Records*). Similarly, after the fall of Kanpur, Sergeant W.B. Burnett noted in his unpublished first-person account: "Cawnpore was won, and now the pillage is terrible – gold, silver, jewellery, clothing of every description […] Babel was nothing to the confusion that prevailed" (IOR/MSS EUR C824). The situation went so out of hand after the fall of Delhi in September 1857 that Lt. E.H. Paske of the Punjab Administration wrote to G.F. Edmonstone, the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, about withdrawing "Prize Agents from the city of Delhy" and saving the "inhabitants from further spoliation." He added, "Thousands of them took no part against us. But all are involved in the general ruin" (*Mutiny Records* 276). As complaints against atrocities by British troops rent the air, Edmonstone was forced to chastise even John Lawrence, reminding him, clearly, that "the property of those who took no active part in the rebellion, or who aided us, must be left untouched in their possession" (*Mutiny Records* 280). Paske, earlier, in a long letter to Edmonstone had openly urged that,

> some definite rule as to what shall be considered prize property at Delhie is necessary. The Prize Agents claim the jewels of the ex-King, as well as all horses and arms, […] the Chief Commissioner considers, expedient if Government declared to what extent the property in the city of Delhie is to be considered the right of the captors. It would appear to him that it ought not to extend to any real property, whether inside or outside the city,

nor to any personal property not actually captured by the army (*Mutiny Records* 269-270).

Seriously concerned over rampant looting by the British troops and their Indian allies in the city of Delhi, Paske reminded Edmonstone of the 1832 Act: "booty acquired in war is the property of Government and not the army; and, though it is usual to make such booty over to the captors, Government can clearly place a limitation on its extent" (ibid.). The constant dread under which the common people of Delhi lived after British 'liberation' of their homes finds beautiful teary expression in the couplets and letters of Mirza Ghalib.

Scandals involving rampant looting of native properties and violation of the war booty act during the Mutiny are openly discussed in George Chesney's 1876 three-volume mutiny novel, *The Dilemma*. A triangular love story set in the fictional town of Mustaphabad (Lucknow) during the Uprising, the novel presents Kirke, a war hero (possibly modeled on Hodson of Hodson's Horse fame, who murdered the Mughal princes after the fall of Delhi), guilty amongst other things of appropriating jewels of a native Raja. Kirke and Yorke, the hero of the novel, apprehends a Raja on a reconnoitering mission. The Raja is killed and his property confiscated. Kirke as senior officer takes charge of the regal jewels but instead of eventually handing them over to the prize agents, he keeps them for himself. On a later occasion, on being asked by Yorke about the jewels Kirke sends a letter telling Yorke that the jewels were not precious and he has handed them over to the agents. Having thus appropriated the jewels, he marries Olivia (the center of attraction for Kirke, Yorke, and another officer by the name of Falkland) and settles at Mustaphabad after the Mutiny to enjoy a lavish lifestyle funded by the jewels. He is soon accused of embezzlement by his Subedar-Major [native officer] who knew of the jewels. During the Court of Inquiry, Yorke's evidence and the letter written to him by Kirke claiming he had

handed over of the jewels to prize agents become crucial evidences. Kirke is found guilty of appropriating the jewels, but because of his distinguished service during the Mutiny, he is excused from any punishment. Instead, he is asked to opt for voluntary retirement.

The 'dilemma' in the novel is indeed with how to reconcile Kirke the war-hero and savior of Europeans during the Uprising with Kirke the unscrupulous emblazoner, who violates all existing military laws by appropriating the native jewels. Unlike Colonel Herncastle's, Kirke's transgressions are detected early and contained jointly by the military establishment and responsible 'citizens' such as Yorke. Kirke is presented not only as an embarrassment for the military establishment, but also as a danger to the domestic space. Kirke marries Olivia by telling her that her first husband, Falkland, was dead, when in reality he was only a prisoner in the rebel camp. After his 'retirement' from service and return to England, he conveniently leaves Olivia in abject poverty, himself moving to Egypt in search of fortune. The character of Kirke in the novel is that of a through and through wanton profligate and soldier-of-fortune redeemed only by Yorke and Falkland's unflinching devotion to Olivia and the British nation. The latter two serve as counter-points to the dishonest and aberrant Kirke; they are the *real* men of the Empire. Though not comparable to *The Moonstone*, Chesney's novel openly acknowledges crimes perpetrated during counter-insurgency operations. At the same time, the marginalization of Kirke, the representation of Kirke as inherently evil with no ethical binding to his profession, country, and wife, goes a long way in marking him out as extraordinarily aberrant. He is definitely not the norm. Similarly, the issue of looting is singularized as rare, while the murdering of the Raja without any charges by both Kirke and Yorke is never questioned. The underlying message appears to be that unfortunate and shameful things happen at times of war,

but there is always the law that prevails at the end. For every Kirke there is an honest Yorke and Falkland.

'The Delhi Omelet'!

Immediately after the Uprising, another more specific problem concerning distribution of prize money shares to soldiers who took part in the 1857 campaigns surfaced in England. Between 1 March 1858 (six months after the fall of rebel Delhi) and 10 October 1865, *The London Times* carried as many as thirty letters to the editor, apart from thirteen news reports, from disgruntled veterans or their kin all complaining about delays in the distribution of prize money. As "Father of One Who Fell" in the Delhi siege writes, the letters published in the *London Times*, he hoped, would "aid a dissatisfied body of men by calling public attention to the injustice"('Delhi'). In letter after letter, complaints against this "injustice" – lack of transparency in the timely distribution of prize money by the government – was expressed, and the government criticized:

> delay has passed into a familiar house-hold word; procrastination seems to be also another synonym for "Government;" […] the Government has appropriated to itself a considerable portion of the treasures found at Delhi and at Lucknow, […] the patent fact remains, that the brave soldiers who shed blood at the taking of Delhi, at the relief and at the capture of Lucknow, have not received one farthing of those spoils with which the above-mentioned cities abounded (Patiens 'Prize Money').

One letter in particular must be mentioned here. Written in form of a domestic parable, it moralizes the virtue of "keep[ing] your promise," and warns the government of possible consequences if the shares are not delivered to the deserving. It presents its argument through an interesting allegory about an omelet and an over enthusiastic female cook. The allegory tells of a

cook working in an upscale household with the habit of picking out from the "good things" destined for the "dining-room table." The lady of the house, concerned about the cook's inclination and in order to restrain her from picking out of food prepared for a dinner-party, promised her [the cook] a part of "all that was left of the [cheese] omelet after the party." The cook agreed, but the omelet turned out to be so good that the lady's husband demanded having the left-over's for next day (refusing to honor his wife's promise to the cook). The story ends by condemning the husband for forcing the lady to retract on her promise and by claiming that without the cook there would not have been any omelet to begin with. The *postscript* adds, "The omelet is known in the cookery books under the name of the Delhi omelet." The moral: "both justice and good policy were on the side of" keeping the promise to make certain that the cook does not revenge her in the future ('Delhi Prize Money'). The anxiety about the cook (read British soldiers) picking out of the State's war booty [omelet] or resorting to looting if shares were not distributed timely and magnanimously was shared by most letter writers. Some expressed their concern more openly: "[i]t is now two years and a half since Lucknow was taken, and not a farthing has been distributed. It is not to be expected that our soldiers will, when an opportunity for looting as at Lucknow offers itself, again desist from taking everything they can lay their hands upon if this is the way they are treated" (Fairplay 'Delhi and Lucknow').

While corruption in the government and soldiers acting in uncivilized manner were obvious embarrassments to a nation clamoring to be modern and culturally superior, what was equally unsettling for the liberal-minded Victorian readers of the *London Times* was the presence of a strong theological determinism in the lay understanding of modern State legislations.[102] One notes in Paske's official correspondences and William Russell's diary, for instance, grave

[102] As one Member of Parliament put it during a discussion on the Deccan Prize Money on 6 August 1832, "It was a disgrace to the British name and character, that such enormities should have been practised […]." (Hansard *Parliamentary* 1156). Also, see Hansard *Parliamentary* 1135 – 1156 & 1322 – 1325.

concerns over the unbecoming actions of British soldiers and the undue suffering of the natives at their hands during the Mutiny. But, on the other hand, in the letters written during the prize-money controversy, one finds a regressive, racist consciousness asserting divine right over the life and wealth of the inferior, non-Christian natives. One letter, signed 'Ek Sahib,' says:

> That warfare should be carried on by a civilized people with as much lenity as possible is universally admitted; nevertheless, from all time, upon the capture of any fortified city more or less rapine has invariable ensued. Were I a Pharisee, I might quote instances of its being enjoined upon a chosen people as an act of justice; *I content myself however, with modern authority*, and learn therefore that prize-money is a recognized institution ('Lucknow') [emphasis mine].[103]

Another person, in the characteristic style of the 'Ek Sahib' letter, clearly states that the right of victorious soldiers over prize money, however ascertained by modern Parliamentary authority, has always been a "recognized institution." It is, declares the writer, founded around a divine precedence in the First Book of Samuel. Reading the recently concluded war in the colony as a divine act of justice on inferior peoples of the world, the letter asserts the right of the English public, especially the Christian soldiers who fought in India, on the wealth of the colonized subjects (H.I.M 'Chinese'). The 'right' of the soldier on war-booty is emphatically re-presented as divinely sanctioned, legislative law is explained as a mere extension of an existing Christian precept, and the State urged to pay its Crusaders without delay as a fact of God's will.

Consciousness expressed through these letters force us to rethink Carl Schmitt's notorious thesis about liberal democratic (and secular) concepts of modern politics as, essentially, transposed theological ones. What's more, these letters appear to point out somewhat injuriously for interlocutors and intellectual supporters of a liberal secular state that a highly

[103] *The Times*, Jan 11th, 1860, 'The Lucknow Prize-Money'.

enlightened piece of legislation like the 1832 Act was in reality, at least in view of the masses, nothing different from a law mentioned in the Bible. The 'political' question of prize-money during the 1860's as voiced by the masses is therefore not simply a question of rightful demand, but a claim established and voiced on basis of religious authority and racial exclusivity. The claims over enemy property in the letters pan out in two major directions. One evolves through discursive constructions of the self as 'god's own' to justify the demand on basis of Calvinist destiny, while the other, complementarily, dehumanizes the enemy as a religious and racial Other, hence degenerate and best dispossessed. The letters advocate right of the soldiers on enemy fortunes not only for their successful subjugation of the insurgents, but with claims of a just war fought against the non-believers for the preservation of Christian religion, White race, and the British nation. The detractors construct out of their grievances a "monotheme of identity" to substantiate their demands and voice their deeply retrenched consciousness of the Other.[104]

The prize-money issue like the moonstone brings the domestic and the colony together, but unlike the moonstone, the colony as figured in the debates is more thoroughly determined, rephrased, and suppressed through domestic demands. The controversy intriguingly illustrates the asymmetric relationship between the center and margin within the parameters of which even basic demands for legislative right claimed by the inhabitants of the center translate into violence against the colonized situated at the margins. If the invention of steam-powered cotton mills is directly responsible for the destruction of the rural cotton industries in the colony, the liberatory movements for the working-class, women, and veteran's are not free from ideologically affecting the subjugated residents of the colon. For that matter, even human rights movements within the metropole claiming 'universal' rights can share anything with, demand anything for, and offer anything to the colony apart from misery and oppression. As postcolonial feminist theorists like

[104] I draw the phrase 'monotheme of identity' from Basu 'Hinduvta.'

Chandra Talpade Mohanty have claimed in *Feminism Without Borders*, '*your* feminism is not *ours*.' My detraction from Nayder, perhaps, becomes clearer now. In a system of power, where a person's skin is his passport to privileges within the colony, sympathy for the metropolitan working-class or woman does not translate into sympathy for the colonized Other. There can be no communication between the colonizer and the colonized, no sharing of feelings, emotions, agendas, or causes. To speak for and to champion the cause of the domestic Other is not the same as siding with the colonized. To speak of or for the colonized through or next to the domestic Other is another way of subsuming the identity and speech of the Other through metropolitan power structures. This has also been the argument of subaltern theorists like Spivak and writers like Assia Djebar. However the metropolitan space speaks, it should be reminded of, in the words of Djebar, "Ne pas prétendre <parler pour>, ou pis, <parler sur>" (9), to not speak for or of the Other even for claiming civil or human rights on behalf of the Other. As Spivak clarifies, no one can speak for the subaltern nor share the subaltern's speech; for within the structure of a power apparatus like colonialism, the subaltern does not speak since its speech is always hijacked, co-opted, interpreted, and represented by the master in context of its own ideological parameters ('Can').[105]

To return to post-Mutiny Victorian society, a major strand in the ideological project for pacification of the colony aimed at historically and ideologically distinguishing the 'new' rule of the Queen from the erstwhile regime of the East India Company. Queen Victoria's 1858 Proclamation acknowledged allegations of abuse levied against the Company officials, evangelical missionaries, and itinerant adventurers as true. The years of the Company's rule was written off as a period of colonial misadministration associated with degenerate *Nobobs*,

[105] I thank Reshmi Mukherjee for tuning me into this argument. See also my reading of Ezra Jennings in comparison to Murthwaite below as a belated elaboration of this argument below. I do not mention Jennings here because that disturbs both context and content of my argument on prize-money.

corruption of Warren Hastings, deception, double-dealings, and unwarranted excesses (see, Keay).[106] As a corrective, the Royal Proclamation promised end of corruption, effective government, and absolute religious tolerance (*FSUP* II: 525-528).[107] While concerns over immoderate behavior by colonial officials always worried British imperial consciousness, the ideological necessity of comporting colonial history in two distinct phases, the Company's and the Crown's, as we see in Kaye for example, was expedient for transferring blame for the Uprising from the collective and onto the policies of the East India Company only. Insinuations against Evangelicals and errant individuals were part-and-parcel of this overarching historical process.[108] For those in the colonial administration spearheading the pacification project under Governor-general 'Clemency' Canning, the most important task was to convince the natives that

[106] In contrast, the ideals and speeches of Burke and Thomas Monro were cited as authentic British opinion of the colony.

[107] It is equally important to mention here that the counter proclamation issued by the Begum of Oudh against the imperial proclamation of Victoria, categorically pointed out the underlying religiosity of Victoria's statement thus discounting its liberal claims. See, *FSUP* II: 528-531.

[108] This historical construction of phases was thoroughly unjustified, false, and not as black and white as is often given. An Evangelical enthusiasm for reform was present in the missionaries as in the rungs of the administration. Most of them, like Macaulay's disciple Charles Trevlyan, believed in reform as a way to destroy corrupt native religious practices and for ushering in a climate of moral change within the colony. These young Turks, trained in ideals of Bentham, Mill, and distinguished by a general cast of mind that believed in "malleability of human character" and shared "a limitless enthusiasm for the reformation of Indian society" plunged headlong into a program of reforming legal, educational, and infrastructural systems of the colony. The liberal reform agenda was of course not only aimed at morally reforming the natives. For more cunning proponents like Macaulay it was necessary to uplift the colony and make it an equal partner within an interactive market economy. The liberal conviction, that Britain has been given dominion over India to civilize her, carried a hidden economic clause: "To trade with civilized men is infinitely more profitable than to govern savages." See, Metcalf *Aftermath* 3-45. In contrast, it was the denizens of Hastings's era, like Charles Metcalfe, the Resident of Delhi, who warned against this reforming zeal and opposed the intervention by both administration and missionaries in native cultures. Conservatives like Ellenborough, who was the Governor-general from 1842-44, also opposed liberal ideals of colonial reform, especially education. This is not to say that atrocities perpetrated by the so-called 'Nobobs' for personal economic gain did not affect colonial politics. It did, but so did later liberal programs as far as these concentrated on education, legal, and social reforms without trying to rectify economic hardships suffered by the masses due to policies of Cornwallis and others. Post-Mutiny attempts to give the liberals a clean chit, and condemn conservative actions and economic oppression by the erstwhile 'Nobobs' as reasons for the outbreak, was ideologically motivated. So were representations of indigenous opposition of liberal reform of society and education. It was used to explain the traditionally regressive character of the native and the rebellion. (I discuss this point in more detail in my fifth chapter). Correspondingly, the presence and support of a western educated native bourgeois pressure group, especially the ones based in Calcutta, was cited for purposes of explaining native desire attending these liberal reforms. Later this excuse was presented for supporting and uplifting this group into the forefront of nationalist politics.

Victoria's Proclamation was indeed the harbinger of a new era for British-Indian relations. But, opinions at home, such as those expressed during the prize-money controversy, contradicted this unique visualization of colonial history and was thoroughly unnerving for the colonial administration. Moreover, a series of scandals in the colony highlighted the failure of the 'new' administration to rectify old political and social situations. The most famous of these, the "Case of the Ranees of Tanjore," found wide publicity in both England and India (just like the prize-money controversy), reconciling many with the sad realization that the new administration was not different in any way from that of the Company before (see, IOR/H 726 1543-1559).

Liberalism & Crisis in Belief: The Case of the Ranees of Tanjore

The case of Tanjore was very similar to cases like that of the kingdoms of Oudh and Jhansi in the 1850's. Both Oudh and Jhansi were annexed under the infamous 'Doctrine of Lapse' in the 1850s. However, there was one crucial difference. Unlike either Oudh or Jhansi, Tanjore was not a signatory to Wellesley's 'Subsidiary Alliance,' the precursor of Dalhousie's 'Doctrine,' thus technically outside the sphere of British political interference.[109] But that did not stop the British government in India from annexing Tanjore. Following the death of the ruler of Tanjore, the Company refused to recognize his adopted sons as heirs to the throne of Tanjore and took up direct administration of the state. They also confiscated all private property belonging to the deceased ruler and his wives. After the transfer of power in 1858, the queens of Tanjore appealed against the Company, hoping that the new administration of the Queen would revoke

[109] Signatories were bound to support British troops within their territory through annual payments to the E.I. Co. or by ceding a part of their territory. These British troops were supposed to protect the ally from external threats and as a result, the State's own army was disbanded. A British Resident was also posted to the court in order to observe if the government was functioning smoothly and advise the ruler on various issues regarding administration. Most State's that were later annexed on charges of misgovernment, a clause in the 'Doctrine of Lapse,' were often Subsidiary Allies, like Oudh. The Subsidiary Alliance basically made local kingdoms into British feudatories.

the Company's unwarranted confiscation of their private properties, especially their *jewels*![110] Regrettably, for the Tanjore queens, the case was decided in favor of the Company.

The Anglo-Indian press reacted sharply to the court ruling. In a news report published on 29 March 1860, the *Phoenix* labeled the court ruling "indefensible." It went on to state that the Court's objection "*to perpetuate a titular principality at a great cost to the public revenue*" was a piece of the "most barefaced effrontery" since the State of Tanjore was neither a British feudatory nor a subsidiary ally (IOR/H 726 1544-1545). "All else was gained – honour alone was lost" refrained *Allen's Indian Mail* on 5 May 1860 (IOR/H 726 1543). Launching a caustic attack on the new governor of Madras, it wrote: "Sir Charles Trevelyan – the model governor, *Indophilus*, […] the philanthropic denouncer of 'high-handed insolence of a dominant race' [and] the self-styled friend of India thus far […] has only been distinguished from that of his predecessors by being more influenced by crotchets and fanciful impulses […]." This has led to "positive injustice and cruelty." "[T]o restore the private property *wrested by force*," the *Mail* noted "is simply a question of national honour and good faith" (IOR/H 726 1543-1544) [emphasis mine]. As the case and controversy around the Tanjore jewels rolled on without any solution, the *Madras Athenaeum* joined the chorus in complaining against the administration. It wrote:

> Nothing […] would so much gratify the Natives and win back their forfeited confidence in British good faith, as a few such practical proofs that the bad policy of territorial greediness had really been repented of and forsaken […] proof that the high principles set forth in the Royal Proclamation of last year really actuate and govern the Crown, in its

[110] The Proclamation by Victoria had specifically stated that all confiscated property were to be returned etc. See, *FSUP* II: 525-526.

> administration of Indian affairs, […] would be worth thousands of British bayonets and parks of artillery (IOR/H 726 1548).

Reminding its readers of unjust actions perpetrated during the Mutiny and drawing attention to the new government's failure to rectify past injustices in any way, the *Bombay Times* declared the annexation of Tanjore as the "pretext of rapacity." The looting of Tanjore jewels "unparalleled in the history of modern civilization." It added, "a story of this kind, related to a Roman proconsul, would provoke the most vehement outburst of Christian indignation against pagan morality, while perpetrated by a Christian government, it deserves the reprobation of the world. Do you think that India will be governed peacefully, while wrongs so unheard of are inflicted upon her people? […] it would be a disgrace to us as Englishmen and as Christian men [to] approve them." The "Tanjore case raises fully the question, whether the relations subsisting between the Supreme Government of this country and the native princes, are still to be determined by the arbitrary will of the former; or are to be regulated by a law, to which the weak may appeal, and by which the strong may be bound" (IOR/H 726 1551-1553).

Other instances of colonial exploitation, whenever revealed, also brought back anxieties over Christian identity and possible native uprisings against British rule. For instance, in an official memorandum addressed to Charles Wood around 1862, the writer (probably John Lawrence) regrets of "homicides perpetrated by Europeans on natives of this country." These killings, he observes, are always done with "wanton recklessness" and usually "without provocation." The Europeans kill a native "under an impulse" and without any estimation of the other as human. This, he goes onto add, is "our greatest source of embarrassment in this country – the extreme difficulty of administering equal justice between natives and Europeans" (IOR/H 726 1564-1565). Surely, these scandals did not pass unnoticed to writers like Collins, especially

the Tanjore case and prize-money controversy both of which received immense press coverage in England. These 'scandals of the state' were not only acrimonious to the new government's stated goal of establishing liberal and accountable government, but also responsible for dissolving the claims of difference through which the new administration sought to segregate itself from the erstwhile corrupt Company rule. Importantly still, by constituting British actions and dispositions as similar to that of the uneducated, spiritually bereft Other, these cases of British injustices further compromised the colonial symbolic order as an order of difference.

The Horror of Intimacy

My contention that *the Moonstone* refractively articulates anxiety over reports of British atrocities in the colony may appear similar to Christopher Herbert's general claim about mutiny fiction: these respond, react, and revise instances of British brutality thereby both subliminally challenging and consolidating imaginaries of imperial sovereignty. But, as I explain in my introduction, Herbert overlooks the ideology of dissent within the metropolitan space. As the public controversy over the prize-money shows, the general Victorian mindset was far more regressive than Herbert accords. In specific context of Collins's novel, I want to suggest however that though *the Moonstone* evokes concerns over British miscreancy in the colony, it also avoids assuming direct and collective responsibility for these concerns. The trauma over experiencing the vaunted edifice of liberalism as cracked is buried and overwritten through the character of Murthwaite who is inserted into the novelistic universe (as I show in my next section) to catalyze a dramatic reassertion of responsible imperial governance qua surveillance of the Other.

In the *Moonstone*, the characterization of Herncastle and the distancing of his actions in time are connected with that particular train of thinking, which seeks to define the Uprising, metaphorically, as a product of actions of few uncharacteristically renegade individuals. The

novel's circumlocutory broaching of questions about ethical action and colonial responsibility in times of war, the irascible temporality and history of the moonstone reminding its readers of looting and uncivilized pillage that followed the Mutiny, are present alongside a precarious attempt at historically dislocating such issues from the immediate present. Not only are generations separated within the novelistic universe in terms of opinion and character, but Herncastle is also completely segregated from his family. The text clearly mentions the impact the looted stone exerted on the Herncastle family – it was the cause of "private difference" between John Herncastle and his cousin and the reason for the latter's falling out with him (13-15). The anxiety over the continuation of wanton British administration of the colony is besides presented through the 'family papers' as bringing "its own fatality with it" – a "guilt" which not just Herncastle, but all those who endorsed (and shared in) his action would suffer from and regret (16). Herncastle himself loses all social standing because of the "blot of the Diamond," the possession of which he "didn't dare acknowledge" either from a fear of "its getting him into a difficulty with the military authorities" or from a fear to his own life (43-44).

Herncastle's unscrupulous activities in the colony are not the only cause of embarrassment to British sovereignty. His intimate relation to the stone, which deconstructs the exclusivity of imperial subjectivity and represents the self as a mirror image of the Other, disintegrates notions of British racial and cultural inimitability. Herncastle's looting pushes to surface anxieties over not only British colonial misadventures but also of dangers which emerge in effect of intimating two distinct histories and spaces. The danger of this unwarranted intimacy is borne out at the level of Collins's construction and connection of plots in the novel. Stephen Arata in his *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin de Siècle* explains the novel as exasperatedly moving from the colonial to the domestic plot, from politics of space to scandals involving the

sexual body. The moonstone, according to Arata, is less a symbol of "Britain's imperial transgressions" and more of Rachel's "compromised virtue" (136). The over-wrought deviation into the domestic plot from the colonial problem is so starkly evident in the narrative that it definitely merits the attention Arata gives to it. Tweaking Arata a little, one can say that the 'Indian frame' is hastily replaced by a "family scandal" not because the novel is interested in discussing a sexual scandal but for distancing anxieties over colonial misrule. In arguing thus, I side more with Ronald Thomas, whom Arata dismisses, for suggesting that the shift attempts to displace the question of "crime […] from the original scene of imperial conquest and murder [to] the body of a promiscuous womanizer" ('Mingling' 239). The narrative move from the colony to a "family scandal," that is from crime in the colony to the crime of Ablewhite's murder, must be read in context of this authorial intention or tension as pointed out by Thomas. I do not imply a tension that Collins may have felt in choosing between writing a domestic narrative and writing a detective story. Instead, the tension I allude to is representative of a conflict besetting Collins's attempts at avoiding exposure of the real character of the British nation as displayed during the Uprising. It is a tension over acknowledging the brutal and wanton measures adopted by Neill, Renaud and others in subjugating the mutineers and, in effect, resembling the Other in villainy; and, more generally, over the long history British (mis)rule in the colony. It is an anxiety about how to justify British actions, how to explain repeated claims made in letters over the prize-money controversy that if the money is not distributed British soldiers might resort to indiscriminate looting when the opportunity presents itself again. A question of how to come to terms with threats and apprehensions that conflict with claims of British racial and cultural superiority – claims of Britain as a law abiding, moral civilization respectful of their charges.

The ominous diamond and anxieties evoked by or encapsulated within it return in the text with demands of a more thorough separation between the domestic and the colonial spaces. Like the indigenous signs and rumors during the Uprising, which the administration ignored or failed to detect and comprehend, the mysterious stone and the Brahmins on its pursuit dramatize a dangerous breach between imperial security and indigenous challenge. Murthwaite is Collins's response to this anxiety – an *extraordinary* figure responsible for ideologically partitioning spaces and containing affect. Interestingly, no critic, not even Roy, has taken this aspect of Murthwaite's character into account. Murthwaite's successful penetration into and surveillance of native society reflect back to the demands made in the writings by Ball, Holloway, and Kaye for comprehensive supervision of sites of native collusion. However, Murthwaite is a multi-layered construction exerting multi-layered ideological agencies within the novel. Murthwaite interestingly fails to arrest the free circulation of anxieties evoked by the stone completely. His final lines figure the Other as beyond the possibility of holistic surveillance, and charge the readers to be wary of capricious future tribulations of the moonstone.

Yet, Murthwaite as a figure of imperial surveillance is a most interesting study. His engagement with indigenous society, on the one hand, shares similarities with "iterological mediation of indigenous society and landscape in […] British travel writing" (Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny* 156). On the other, he redefines social monitoring on basis of information retrieval as prevalent in eighteenth-century practices of "controlling newswriters, corralling groups of spies and runners, and placing agents at religious centres, in bazaars and among […] military men and wanderers" (Bayly *Empire* qtd. in Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny* 157). Murthwaite is also a prototype for late Victorian heroes who perform espionage in racial disguise at the cusp between administrative intelligence and indigene knowledge. My following section will look at

Murthwaite as satisfying post-Mutiny demands for extraordinary surveillance in context of the historical backdrop against which his character gains life and elicits interest for Collins's Victorian readers.[111]

III

The Imperial Design of the Moonstone

The ideology governing Collins's narrative construction and the modality for detecting 'crime' within the novelistic universe are structured around strategic gathering of information. This is in perfect alignment with the arrangement of the novel as a collection of first person narratives – the plan being "not to present reports, but to produce witnesses" (197).[112] The novel's ideological script accomplishes, more generally, what Elaine Freedgood identifies as the general "Victorian cultural enterprise [of] the textual construction of a safe England in a dangerous world" (*Risk* 1). Besides Freedgood, Anthony Giddens's theories of risk management within modernity can offer an alternative perspective for understanding Collins's specific desire for effective containment of the Other through the construction of an information armada. In this context, the character of the "eminent Indian traveler," Mr. Murthwaite, is most dependable for he knows, understands, and controls the Other by literally and metaphorically (since he knows the workings of their minds) being in their midst. As a knowledgeable subject, he reconfigures authority as one who can effectively intervene and survey the nebulous minds, spaces, and desires of the Other. Murthwaite's eye-witness account of the stone's restitution within the

[111] For a discussion on late-Victorian fantasies of imperial surveillance in mutiny fiction, see Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny* 156-180. For an account of British intelligence gathering in colonial India, see Bayly *Information and Empire*. I discuss some of these points in determining the ideological agency of Murthwaite, but focus more on the unreferenced connections than those already studied. For example, in context of Murthwaite, I mention Richard Burton in passing since that relationship has already been looked into. Though Chakravarty does not discuss Murthwaite, his discussion of 1890s mutiny fiction and the representations of surveillance in these works is a good beginning point for understanding Murthwaite's relation to these later representations.

[112] Collins's novel follows a moment of crisis into eventual suture through the agency of 'secular,' unofficial citizens of the empire as an ideal way for exercising efficacious control over the Other. For a discussion on the emergence of secular agents and its relation to the capillary mechanism of State surveillance and disciplining, see Miller *Novel*.

colony is the final piece in the 'collection' and also the most authoritative as far as it succeeds in resolving the mystery of the missing stone by reporting on it from the heart of the "wild" colonial landscape, from the origins, i.e. where it all began. His narrative establishes closure qua collection, collation, and transfer of information from the colony to the metropolitan center. Though different characters at different points in the narrative illuminate the mystery and help resolve the domestic crisis, Murthwaite's narrative provides the most compelling piece of evidence about the Indian plot and the moonstone on basis of his ability to represent the stone's final moments. This he achieves by successfully importing himself into the liminal zone between Asiatic and European contact spaces.[113] This also allows Murthwaite to caution the colonial state against possible future disturbances.

In the post-Mutiny decade, it was becoming increasingly obvious that a hands-on theory of administrative control over the Other was impossible and impractical to execute. Gathering of critical information was more necessary because it offered suitable reaction time to respond effectively in cases of uprisings. Hence, it is my belief, the inconclusive ending of the novel. Since nothing is finite in a severely pluralized colonial space, modalities of surveillance must be a continuously evolving process if it is to mediate administrative understanding vis-à-vis indigene localisms. Murthwaite embodies this agenda – possessed of logic and means of extraordinary surveillance, he functions on behalf of the colonial state as an uber-reader of possible conflicts and subversions. Insofar as time is of the essence in responding to crisis, perceptive surveillance is necessary to effectively tackle threats without being caught napping. Novelty of this conceptualization is however not limited to the reconstruction of the masterly

[113] Ezra Jennings, for instance, whose role in solving the crime is undoubtedly equally important, has a singular disadvantage when compared to Murthwaite – he cannot claim to have, literally, the last word. The final moment in the novel is reserved exclusively for Murthwaite and not someone whose blood contains "the mixture of some foreign race." I discuss the role of Jennings and his difference from Murthwaite below.

subject qua a desire to recover power through knowledge, but as D.A. Miller's classic study notes in a different context, in the secularization of surveillance and de-officialization of control. Desire for and apparatuses of control are transferred from the purview of State and/or military inteligence, which had failed miserably to predict the 1857 Uprising, to common people of science and specialized knowledges. In addition to satisfying the desire for "new, extra-systemic, methods of conflict management," Murthwaite's racial contorting of identity balances the geo-political structure of the narrative by following the stone back into the Other space, thereby returning the plot to where it started. In other words, in segregating he intertwined plots, histories, and affects.

Unfortunately, not many scholars, hardly any for that matter, have focused on the character of Murthwaite for studying the novel's ideological script and/or context. The only reference that comes to mind is Ashis Roy's essay in which Roy analyzes Murthwaite as an "ascetic ideal of imperialism." Through Murthwaite, Roy claims, Collins extends a vision of liberal colonial governance – the colony is to be governed through a practice analogous to ascetic idealism, emphasizing detachment, responsibility, and "paternal benevolence." This claim summons to mind the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century ideas about colonial governance that stressed paternal affiliation to the natives. Paternalism is also evident in writings of liberal ideologues who, like Macaulay and his disciple Trevleyan, believed in "gradualism" or the slow but sure training of the child-like natives. But of course, as we see in Kaye's discussion of the Mutiny, belief in the native's gradual progression under paternal British tutelage was substituted by a belief in racial determination after 1857. Post-Mutiny, the idea of progressing the native on the path of civilization was displaced by a racist belief in the essential inferiority of the Other race. In fact, Kaye held blind paternalism of senior British officers, conservative

policies of Evangelicals, as well as Macaulay's dream of 'Englishism,' all directly responsible for the mutiny. Therefore, following Roy and also detracting from him, I want to propose a reading of Murthwaite's character by focusing on the more immediate historical (con)text of the novel. I rely, again, on crossing wires; i.e. on short-circuiting. I do this by studying a number of overlooked historical events from the 1860's, like Arminius Vámbéry's travels in Central Asia, which foreshadow the fictional account of Murthwaite's clandestine journey to India in the novel. I show that Collins's fictional character and his journey are closely modeled on, if not directly influenced by, reports of historical travels undertaken by the likes of Vámbéry in the early 1860s. I also argue that the fantasy of surveillance maps onto these adventurous reports and is a response to post-Mutiny debates about devising effective extra-systemic controls. In the process, I question Chakravarty's claim that fictions of disguised espionage appear only at the turn of the century, or that that these were purely fictional lacking any historical basis. I will show, instead, that Murthwaite not only foreshadows the *fin-de-siècle* heroes, but also unites the two distinct forms of heroism that Chakravarty studies as characterizing the heroes in late-Victorian mutiny fictions. Murthwaite is both the hero who surveys enemy territories in racial disguise demonstrating "the plasticity of the colonial state" and the auratic hero who commands reverence of the natives and peers and thus "embodies the ideological justification and legitimacy of the ruling mission" (Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny* 155).[114]

Informatics & Empire: A Historical Context

British authorities realized the critical value of gathering information for the preservation of supremacy most painfully through the Uprising. In the aftermath of the revolt, many opined that it was lack of information, which stymied initial efforts on the part of the administration to arrest the bloating tide of the rebellion during the summer of 1857. The Uprising revealed "the

[114] For a discussion of these two types of heroes in late- Victorian fiction, see, Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny* 135-155.

precariousness of British power [in] knowing and controlling the motions of the communities and polities of India" (Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny* 4). It is from this concern and an "inherent difficulty" about knowing indigenous society that the post-Mutiny rush towards devising various ways of systematizing knowledge about India can be understood. From the increase in the number of entries on India in major periodicals of the day to fantastic propositions of surveillance as found in Collins's novel, the desire for knowledge was rooted in a governing anxiety over another insidious outbreak.[115] The increase in production and dissemination of knowledge is perceptibly an overanxious attempt at saturating existent inadequacies with information supplements. The character of Murthwaite is one more clog in this imperial fantasy of revising control through surveillance, and retrieval and archiving of information.

Thomas Richards *The Imperial Archive* conducts an interesting study of this phenomenon by focusing on the construction of imperial visions of control in conjunction with systems of information retrieval and archival organization of information as knowledge. According to Richards, faced with administrative and military challenges of controlling a geographically spread out empire in the mid- and late- nineteenth century, the administration relied on information to prepare itself against possible threats (1-9). He professes that, information gathered from the vast reaches of the empire by official and unofficial agents constructed the imperial archive – the museums, libraries, and the files of the India Office – all of which, in turn, were "collected and united in service of state and Empire" (6). The 'empire' was more a construction of the archive and less of a physical material space under direct imperial

[115] Between 1854 and 1856, the *Quarterly Review* carried only 1 article on India; the *Westminster Review* carried 7; the *Edinburgh Review* 9; and the *Blackwood's Magazine* 10. In the next 4 years, from 1857 to 1860, the *Quarterly Review* carried 43; the *Westminster Review* 40; *Edinburgh Review* 22; and the *Blackwood's Magazine* 41 – a cumulative increase of 533%. Apart from the usual narratives about the rebellion, these articles covered a vast range of issues from the effect of the climate on British troops in India (*Quarterly Review* 1859); the religions, castes, and creeds of the country (*Blackwood's Magazine* 1858); translations of Sanskrit drama (*Edinburgh Review* 1858 & *Westminster Review* 1857) to more political concerns regarding the relation of the English government in India with native princes (*Westminster Review* 1858).

governance. Especially in regions along the frontier zone, the British had no direct control except for data on the region's terrain and inhabitants obtained through unofficial and quasi-official agents. Similarly, regions too distant from centers of administrative control or too barren to stimulate any interest for direct occupation were also part of the empire only through informational control.[116] Richards's contention directs our attention to the importance of information retrieval and the archive within imperial regimens of control.[117] I find this nineteenth century practice close to the contemporary creation of an informational knowledge armada to negotiate man made risks. Informatics, as it is called today, emphasizes the collection of information from various and often divergent or opposing sources by official and unofficial agents, and their dissemination through easy networked and communicative access (libraries or the internet) as necessary for detecting, investigating, and counteracting any possible man made risks.[118] Recent experiences, like 9/11, explain the psychological need for informatics. Confronted with an unfixed Other who can strike anywhere at any moment, the demand is always for preemption – a demand for a little more time to be prepared and for exceptional policing qua surveillance. Informatics calls aloud for knowledge and control of the Other beyond domestic policing, laws, and juridical structures – concerns not very different from those we

[116] These tenuously held regions however provoked anxiety within imperial consciousness; for it was always a question of keeping one-step ahead of the sinister inhabitants of these frontier regions to ensure that the colonized did not catch up with or see through the colonizer's skilful use of knowledge as responsible for their subjection. These frontier regions were also areas where adventurers freewheeled, often-causing embarrassments for authorities. Kipling's 'The Man who Would be King' is a perfect example of imperial anxieties of these sort. The frontier region in Mutiny fiction was responsible for introducing anxieties referred above as well as for producing a particular kind of chivalric heroism, which Chakravarty terms 'auratic.' For a discussion of the frontier heroes as modeled upon characters like John Nicholson of the Punjab School, see Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny* 148-155.
[117] For a more recent and interesting study see, Wade, *Spies in the Empire*; espec. 29-60; 61-83.
[118] The internet as we know began as a military spy program during the Cold war to identify possible missile threats before it was divested of its military operations and handed over for general public use. For 'risk societies,' see Giddens; Beck.

witness in post-Mutiny England.[119] And it is not unnecessarily provocative to suggest that fifty-seven was indeed the imperial 9/11.[120]

Before moving on, I want to emphasize that it is not my intention to suggest that Murthwaite is a central character in Collins's novel. Neither do I want to propose that the ideological agency of the text rests squarely on him. Instead, I want to highlight "recuperative concerns" and strategies within the novel as built upon a marginal event – the travel undertaken by Murthwaite in racial disguise. In doing so, I hope to establish not only Murthwaite's agency in relation to post-mutiny anxieties about surveillance, but also a historical context within which Murthwaite's character can be situated. This is necessary for understanding Murthwaite's relation to the novel's ideological script and the complicity of the novel with hegemonic discourses of imperial domination.

Mr. Murthwaite is, at best, a marginal character in Collins's novel. He appears only three times in the course of the narrative. First, during the party at Verinder home when the infamous moonstone is stolen; second, during a social gathering when the lawyer Bruff discusses with him the case of the missing stone; and, finally, at the end of the novel, when Murthwaite sends Bruff his eye-witness account of the stone's dramatic restitution in an unknown Hindu temple. In the first two instances, Murthwaite's auratic 'command' over the Other is noticeably established. On the third, when Murthwaite disguises himself as a native and witness the restoration of the stone, the ideological agency of the character vis-à-vis the novel's post-mutiny recuperative agenda is

[119] For a discussion of how an anxiety over a shifting Other circumscribes the need for exceptional policing, see Basu Thakur, 'Of Suture and Signifier in Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005).'

[120] I must clarify in equating 1857 with 9/11, I am not endorsing the theories which assert the same and are most popular presently. That is, I am not following William Dalrymple and Christopher Allen's line of argument. I do not think the connection between the two historical events, 1857 and 9/11 is to be found in Islamic terrorism, since 1857 was not an act of 'Islamic terrorism' nor does Indian Wahabism share any relation to Middle-Eastern Wahabism. Also, the question of *jihad* as it was articulated during fifty-seven is very different from what has today come to be understood in context of 'global Islam'. I explicate my argument in more detail in my final chapter below.

rendered obvious and complete. The colony and its mysteries are never outside the imperial gaze and/or representation; a wishful corrective to the 1857 situation when the administration was surprised with the rebellion and subsequent investigations revealed their blindness to signs of simmering discontent that were present just below the surface of the colonial society.

The character of Murthwaite is meticulously built up through these three brief scenes. Betteredge introduces him to the readers at the very outset as "an eminent public character […] the celebrated Indian traveler." His adventures in uncharted realms as a traveler, his derring-do and knowledge, is confirmed further by Betteredge, when he says, "at the risk of his life, [he] had penetrated in disguise where no European had ever set foot before" (77). Betteredge is but one admirer of Murthwaite amongst many in the novel. The lawyer Bruff, another ardent admirer, later tells us that Murthwaite's decision to set out on another dangerous voyage in the uncharted territories "revived the flagging interest of the worshippers in the hero" (287). Like Richard Burton, whose *Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimmage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* was published in 1855, Murthwaite appears as a "byword for romantic adventuring and cross-cultural impersonation among his contemporaries in England" (Roy *Traffic* 17). Murthwaite's encyclopedic knowledge of the Other is also scrupulously established in the text by Collins. Murthwaite's rational mind and scientific spirit finds eloquent expression in the scene where he explains to Bruff the mysteries of the stone. In this interview, Murthwaite clarifies his particular interest in the stone's disappearance by explaining to Bruff that the "Indian plot [is a] mystery" that has never been "seriously examined" (288). Earlier, during Rachel's birthday party, he had cautioned the gathering against the threat of the wandering Indians and the stone. Even without any prior knowledge of the diamond's checkered history, he had suspected "some very serious motive" behind the conspicuous arrival of the Indians to England. He had pointed out that

"justification of no ordinary kind" was sufficient to explain the long journey undertaken by the Brahmins and their curious interest in the stone (83). He was also the first to draw attention to the stone's possible symbolic value – "[a] Hindoo diamond is sometimes part of a Hindoo religion" (78), and had advised Blake to "cut up" the diamond, for only that would end "its sacred identity as The Moonstone" and the conspiracy surrounding it (85). It is also not without significance that Murthwaite's advice to Blake echoes Herncastle's provision in the Will – to cut up the stone if the clauses of heirship were not met after his death. The effort to synchronize opinions given by two very different men is deliberate in the novel. For that matter, and no less significantly, Murthwaite is the only person in the novel who has any positive estimation of Herncastle. He credits Herncastle as a knowledgeable man, for, as he explains to Franklin Blake, "Colonel Herncastle understood the people he had to deal with" (85). Murthwaite shares with Herncastle an understanding of the Other. This understanding, of course, was gathered through their respective experiences in the colony and through travels in hostile regions outside of "civilized" Europe. Unlike Herncastle however Murthwaite is not prejudiced against the Other. In fact, he is presented as a contrast to the villainous Herncastle. Murthwaite is different from the Colonel because he possesses an objective, rational, scientific spirit and mind. It is this scientific spirit, which expresses a desire to seriously examine the mystery of the moonstone, and, follow "the Indian plot, step by step, […] to trace results back, by rational means, to natural causes" (291).

Murthwaite's character is premeditated to summon not only historical figures like Burton (and others I mention shortly) who surveyed the East and documented their observations thereby rendering the East transparent, but also an image of a rational, scientific 'hero.' It is a fantasy for

a hero who knows and commands reverence from both natives and domestic others.[121] This desire for a rational 'auratic' hero is bound within the novelistic universe and historical context to demands for New Men, that is, for men who could successfully perpetuate the civilizing promise of Europe without compromising the basic tenets of British colonial rule and the structures of Christianity moralities supporting it.[122] And this was precisely the kind of hero in demand during the 1860s with anxieties over indigenous disaffection and Russian designs in Central Asia, and ultimately over India, reaching a feverish pitch.

In the mid- 1860s, the hysterical frenzy over the Mutiny subsided and was replaced by, rather surprisingly, a reconciliatory tone that extended a vision of social fraternity between the natives and their colonial masters. A letter in *The London Times* noted, for example, "True it is we cannot govern India without a commanding army; but it is as true that we cannot beneficially control India without earnest *social fraternity*, and true *benevolent interest* in whatever involves the *welfare or suffering of the people*" (Gardiner 'Famine') [emphasis mine]. Russell in his *Diary* had similarly announced in 1860:

> There is but one way left to retain it [our Empire in India]. Let us be just, and fear not – popularize our rule – reform our laws – adapt our saddle to the back which bears it. Let us govern India by superior intelligence, honesty, virtue, morality, not by the mere force of heavier metal – proselytize by the force of example – keep our promises loyally in the spirit […] Otherwise, the statesman was never born who can render India safe or

[121] As a hero, Murthwaite is distinct from all the other male characters in the novel all of whom suffer from various degrees of corruption and failing. Suffice it to recall, that while Colonel Herncastle (apart from his gross villainies) and Betteredge belong to a different age, young Franklin Blake, in the wake of his "Continental education [,] had left nothing of his old [English] self" (40-41). Others, like Ablewhite is a hypocrite, while Cuff, though admirable, is no match for the educated, classy, gentleman that Murthwaite is, while Jennings is but a half-breed. At the same time, Murthwaite is a credible and effective agent for surveying the East and retrieving valuable information, qualifications beyond the scope of any one else in the novel. For a discussion of differences between Cuff and Murthwaite, see Miller *Novel*.

[122] In chapter 3, I discuss this 'man making' in more detail, especially in context of late-nineteenth century socio-political culture.

> profitable; and our arms will be paralysed in the money-market, for the cost of keeping that glorious Empire will be far greater than the profit we derive from its possession (288).

Fictional and historical representations of the Mutiny also changed in the 60s, as Upamanyu Mukherjee and Gautam Chakravarty show. These moved however slightly from out rightly blaming the natives for the Uprising to critiquing atrocities perpetrated by the Company. In many cases, like Kaye's *History*, a tone of moral self-chastisement replaced the usual rhetoric of avengement, with the Company as the scapegoat (Mukherjee *Crime* 127-134).[123] Though some of the voices calling for fraternal cohabitation are genuine (though not without ideological agendas, as we see in Russell's observations for example), the promptings most responsible for guiding an urgent shift from a call to avengement to an appeal for benevolence have remained inadequately addressed in most critical studies so far. This is essentially so, since contemporary scholars like Chakravarty or Mukherjee exploring this shift and region specific features of colonialism often ignore the global import of colonialism. No study of colonialism, its ideology, politics, etc. is complete without engaging with the polyphonic global political situations of the period. In reality, the colonizer-colonized relationship was never a simple two-fold relationship; it involved other European imperial and local state powers as determining trajectories in what has always been a 'great game.' In the case of British imperialism in context of the Indian subcontinent, both Russia and China played critical roles in influencing imperial policies in

[123] Gautam Chakravarty argues that this displacing of responsibility (onto the corporate body) was strategically aimed at expunging the state of any direct involvement in the misrule of the subcontinent. Still, what is interesting in this ideological shift is the revisioning of the question of colonial authority and its recasting against a deep introspection of the Company, the nation, and the empire. *The Moonstone* as a novel reproduces and perpetuates this discourse of systematizing colonial history by aligning it in context of modernity through the representation of the stone and the arrangement of contrastive interests of Herncastle and Murthwaite around it. An interesting genealogy of colonial history is evoked, processed, and contrived through the moonstone – beginning with the decline of indigenous resistance in the South and consolidation of the Empire in the subcontinent (Anglo-Mysore and Anglo-Maratha wars) through the fall of the Sikh kingdom in North-West (Anglo-Sikh wars) to, finally, the rebellion of 1857. See, Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny* 49.

South Asia.[124] In my opinion, it is the threatening specter of other contending imperial powers and anxieties over local affiliations that influenced British ideologies of control throughout the 1860s. For, it was no longer simply a question of containing indigenous challenges, but also of protecting the stretched British interests throughout the globe from the aggressive imperial ambitions of Russia, in the northwest, and a growingly hostile Chinese, in the north/northeast of the subcontinent. (Increasingly from the mid- 1880s and especially at the turn of the century the anxiety over '*Deutschland über Allah!*' – the 'Holy War' proposed by Wilhelm II to destroy Britain's empire in the East in alliance with Turkey and Afghanistan – would be added to this list.)[125]

Growing apprehensions about a Russian threat to the British Empire in India during the 1860's is visible in press reports published in India, England, and other parts of the 'western' world. A *Chicago Tribune* report published on 10 February 1866, titled 'England Powerless to Prevent Russian Conquest,' describes American reaction to Russian territorial expansions in Central Asia and the precariousness of the British in face of this danger. "We are not among those who take an alarmist view of Russian invasion in Central Asia, and the day is far distant when Russia can make use of her position there to overawe England or override India," the piece announces. But "[t]he truth, moreover, is," it soon recants, "*we are utterly helpless to prevent Russia from proceeding in her career of conquest* if it is her will to carry out her policy of annexation" (emphasis mine). Reporting on Russia's infrastructural strengths, it regrets the

[124] During the eighteenth century similarly British control of the subcontinent depended on the political situation in Europe. William Kirkpatrick, resident at the court of the Nizam of Hyderabad and later the military advisor to Wellesley, in a letter written to his father in 1797 observes, "I wait for nothing but the return of Peace in Europe (on which all our politics in *this part* of the world continually hinge)" (qtd. in Dalrymple *White* 82) [emphasis mine]. With the expulsion of the French and other colonial powers, this dependence waned substantially during the first few decades of the 19th century. However, with the emergence of Russia we find the threat of an imperial Other returning to haunt British imperial ambitions and possessions. See also Keay for a discussion of how European powers and local state powers variously transformed, first, British mercantile, and then, political policies.
[125] For an interesting account see, Hopkirk *Hidden Fire*.

weakness of the British administration in providing any form of check, armed or diplomatic, to the increasing ambitions of Russia.

> We cannot oppose her progress by an armed embassy to Turkestan, and unarmed diplomacy or intrigue at the barbarian courts would be simply ridiculous and a failure. The tracts are so unapproachable to *every power* save Russia that it is difficult to *obtain an accurate knowledge* of the events which are transpiring; and even the English Cabinet itself can only appeal to the Russian court, and *cannot force it* to stay its conquests (emphasis mine).

Characterizing the eventual annexation of India as Russia's "manifest destiny," the report states the political implications of Russian territorial advancements in Central Asia in most unequivocal terms: "her [Russia's] position in Central Asia […] disturbs the influence and policy of Britain by endangering her [Britain's] empire in the East." The only hope for Britain remains in gathering her resources and preparing for the inevitable – "to strengthen her position in India as to make it a dangerous thing for that Power [Russia], when it abuts upon her frontier [India], to encroach upon her possessions."

Britain was, in reality, far from quiescent when the Americans were expressing concern over the impending fate of their erstwhile colonial masters. (The Americans would have to wait almost hundred years, fight a Civil war and two World wars, before they could even start thinking like the British nineteenth-century imperialists). The administration in India and London were aware of developments in Central Asia and already debating the correct strategy to adopt in order to deter further Russian advance. Direct confrontation was not discounted, though for most parts remarked as best avoided.[126] The report in the *Tribune* was however right about one thing –

[126] See for example the 'John Lawrence Collection (1864-69),' IOR MSS: EUR F90/71, for British intelligence and awareness about the issue.

given the region (i.e. Central Asia), it was next to impossible to know anything about what was transpiring there, let alone sending military or diplomatic ventures.

The rugged and barren regions of Central Asia were not completely unexplored by Europeans. Driven by economic motivations and a desire for knowledge, British and other Europeans had undertaken perilous, and often fatal, missions to Tibet, Central Asia, and Chinese Yarkhand ever since the early decades of the fifteenth century (see, Waller; Hopkirk). During the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, British missions to Central Asia had the stated objective of exploration – charting of unknown territories as well as inquiring into the possibility of opening trade with the locals. In the nineteenth century, however, these explorations gained the covert purpose of surveying Central Asian territories for eventual military conquests (see, Richards *Imperial*; Wade). The exponential growth in the number of surveys after the Uprising was a direct result of imperial anxieties over the presence of discontent tribal groups and Wahabis along the frontier zones (see, Jalal). To these were added concerns over Russian designs in Central Asia, the volatile political situation in Afghanistan, and unconfirmed reports of rebel Bengal sepoys hiding in the frontier wilderness and of some fighting alongside the Chinese Taiping rebels (Sheng-Wu & Chem Kun 346-350).[127] Together with a complete absence of any knowledge regarding the geographic terrain and tribal politico-cultural affiliations, the frontier constituted for the post-Mutiny British Government the stuff of paranoia. In face of apprehensions over a Russian invasion and growing hostilities in China, both Tibet and Central Asia occupied British imperial imaginations as never before.

Direct military occupation of these areas was an impractical and implausible idea in the absence of any conclusive knowledge about the terrain and its inhabitants. For this reason alone,

[127] For anxieties about Afghanistan, see, 'Minute by H.E. The Viceroy on Paper by Sir Henry Rawlison on Central Asian Progress of Russia' and 'Minute by H.E. The Governor General of India, dated 3 October 1857, Simla,' in IOR/MSS:EUR F90/71.

as Thomas Richards contends, Central Asia and Tibet were marked as white spaces on British maps – a vital 'blank' within imperial cartography and knowledge. These 'gaps' were subsequently filled following daring explorations in these "hostile territories" by native employees of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India (TSI) beginning in the early 1860s. The native employees of the TSI received special training from British officers at Shimla and other places (just like Kim!).[128] Following weeks of training and preparation, they set out for the 'unknown' disguised as merchants and Buddhist monks with survey equipments imaginatively hidden in their clothes, prayer wheels, and hollowed out walking sticks.[129] Carried under the auspices of the TSI, these expeditions were in reality covert intelligence operations for gathering information.[130] The accounts of the 'Pundits' and their sensational expeditions appealed to the Victorian imagination vividly. T. G. Montgomerie, the brain behind the operations, published his accounts in the Royal Geographical Society magazine, first, in 1865-66, then again in 1867-68 and 1868-69. *The London Times* published their first report on the amazing survey by the 'Pundits' in May of 1865, then again in July and September of the same year, followed by one in May 1866 and another one in March 1868. It is hardly a stretch to imagine that Collins's Murthwaite and his travels may possibly have been influenced, if not, modeled upon these explorations.

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[128] Kipling immortalized these pundits in *Kim*. The character of the Bengali spy, Huree Babu, was partly based on the real life figure of Babu Sarat Chandra Das. See, Waller 193; Richards 14. The 'surveys' of Tibet and Central Asia by Indian natives (called 'Pundits' in the official reports) render transparent British desire in the post-1857 period for establishing "social fraternity" with the natives. This politics of affiliation ensured the proverbial hitting of twin targets with one shot: the Indians were to be effectively included within the folds of the administrative machinery and then used to perpetuate control over the fragile frontier zones of the empire. This was also a symbolic attempt to negate the alienating effects of colonial rule by placing Indian natives within the administrative service and giving them a sense of belonging to the larger space of citizenry offered by the Empire.

[129] For a detailed study, see Hopkirk; and Waller.

[130] Information gathered during the missions was promptly sent to a military base in Calcutta, where it was used to plan defense positions or invasion strategies. The invasion of Tibet in 1904 is a classic example of the above – British forces invaded and occupied Tibet following years of 'secular' scientific survey carried out by explorers and agents like Francis Younghusband.

Victorian fascination with tales of racial cross-dressing is of course much older than these surveys. The idea of a European traveling in disguise through enemy or hostile territory or visiting the fantastic secluded chambers of the East, the harems, was not new. Richard Burton's writings, and before him Byron and Byronic heroes, had for long appealed to the British imagination. But the post-1857 resurgence of interest in stories of racial impersonation and espionage has its roots in the Mutiny. "The knowledge of [native] languages, manners, forms of life and urban and rural topographies" that Europeans in racial disguise demonstrate in mutiny fictions, Gautam Chakravarty believes, are revised from "terror-ridden first-person accounts, where frightened, fumbling attempts at 'going native' are means to escape capture and death" (144). He however dismisses suggestions that fictional representations of European spies within rebel cities are anything other than fiction.[131] Chakravarty has no doubt that mutiny fictions were following the pre-1857 trend of weaving captivating yarns about the colonial inside while describing the adventures of European spies inside rebel zones during fifty-seven.[132] In any case, post-Mutiny fascination with such tales reached a feverish pitch during the era of the New Imperialism with almost every mutiny fiction, from Hume Nisbet's *Queen's Desire* (1893) and Flora Annie Steel's *On the Face of the Waters* (1896) to A.F.P. Harcourt's *Jenetha's Venture* (1899) and G.A. Henty's *In Times of Peril* (1899), carrying sub-plots about disguised espionage.

[131] Popular histories, like Dalrymple's *The Last Mughal*, suggest that mutiny fiction was building up on existing historical accounts of such experiences recorded in personal narratives and press reports. In support of his argument, Dalrymple cites the diary of Jiwan Lal, a native loyalist, who mentions interacting with European spies disguised as "Hindu Faquirs" (looking and sounding Indians save for their eyes) during the siege of Delhi. Dalrymple further claims that authentic proof about European spies working within rebel Delhi in disguises of "sadhus and mendicants" are to be found in the Mutiny Papers of the National Archives of India. See, Dalrymple 204-05.Gautam Chakravarty, has uncompromisingly ridiculed this idea and called such accounts as given by Jiwan Lal unreal and purely fictional. See, Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny*138-142; 157.

[132] I discuss a particular trajectory of this fascination with the colonial inside in my next chapter while discussing how pre-Mutiny voyeuristic interest continued after the Uprising by following the logic and ethics of official necessity. In a subtle reversal of sorts, the secularization of the role of official agents which D.A. Miller speaks of while discussing new forms of disciplining of the domestic and colonial space, in context of the colonial fantasy with the harem or zenana reverts to claiming a official-military sanction. The exploration of the zenana becomes a necessity in post-Mutiny fiction, since it is identified as a hidden conspiratorial space.

In these novels, we witness ordinary men, women, and even schoolboys saving the Empire from subversive conflagrations.[133] Murthwaite anticipates much of what was to come in the 80s and 90s, though in the accounts of Montgomerie and the Pundits, Collins may have already found inspiration for his intrepid traveler.[134] The story of the novel's overlooked historical context and possible inspirational historical models for Murthwaite will remain incomplete if I am to end here. Two more historical figures must be mentioned – Henry Kavanagh, also known as 'Lucknow Kavanagh,' and the Hungarian polyglot, adventurist, Orientalist, and traveler, Arminius Vámbéry.

Henry Kavanagh was a civilian clerk in service of the British administration at Lucknow. During the Uprising, he was amongst the besieged at the Lucknow Residency. After the failure of James Outram's relief column to lift the siege of the Residency, the fate of Lucknow and the besieged depended on Colin Campbell. It became imperative for Outram (the reliever now besieged himself at the Residency) to devise a way for communicating with Campbell in order to advise him on the tenuous situation at Lucknow. Malleson in his 1891 book, *The Indian Mutiny of 1857*, writes in detail about Outram's plan. Outram divined that "though written despatches

[133] In colonial and imperial adventure fiction, too, one finds a continuation of this trend. Short stories by Doyle like 'The Naval Treaty' and 'The Second Stain' revolve around risks and dangers of espionage. More famously, works like Kipling's *Kim* (1901), A.E.W. Mason's *The Four Feathers* (1902), Erskine Childers's *The Riddle of the Sands* (1903), Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent* (1907), and John Buchan's *The Greenmantle* (1916) are the precursors of the genre that was to evolve into the genre of the spy thriller around the 1920s.

[134] Chakravarty surprisingly does not discuss Murthwaite as a possible prototype for the late- Victorian spy heroes and heroines. He insists that these late- Victorian characters like Sammy Hagar in *Queen's Desire* or Jenetha in *Jenetha's Venture* are based on fictional accounts – fantasies of surveillance demonstrating the plasticity of the Empire – or, at best, based on historical characters like Richard Burton. Of course, there are salient differences between Murthwaite and late- Victorian heroes. Most crucial is the question of class. As Chakravarty observes in his discussion of the late-Victorian novels, "the spy-hero is almost never clerk, merchant, planter, creolized subaltern […] but belongs to the administrative-military elite" (169-170). Murthwaite belongs to neither of the two classes. He is an upper-class independent Orientalist who travels for knowing diverse cultures and languages. This at once situates him in relation to figures like Burton and Vámbéry. He is different from the late- Victorian heroes in this sense, though nearer to the figure of Sherlock Holmes. Suffice it to recall that, Holmes, too, spent "two years in Tibet [then at] Lhassa […] with the head lama." Following this, he traveled as a "Norwegian named Sigerson," passing through "Persia, […] Mecca, and" paid a "short but interesting visit to the Khalifa at Khartoum, the results of which" he communicated to the "Foreign Office." See, Doyle, 'Adventures of the Empty House.' For Doyle writing in the 1890's, Tibet, Sudan, and Middle East were areas of critical interest.

might tell much, something more, something in the shape of personal communication with Sir Colin, by an intelligent man who knew every point of the position of the blockaded garrison" was essential (325). However, with Lucknow completely under rebel control and native spies everywhere there was no reliable way to send a communiqué except for a "European to disguise himself, and to attempt to penetrate in that disguise the hostile masses which surrounded" the Residency, the city, and much besides (ibid.). Kavanagh volunteered for the job, though "to all appearance there were few men less qualified" than the extremely fair, tall, and red haired city clerk. Yet, Malleson proudly reminds his readers, "he [Kavanagh] possessed a courage that nothing could daunt, a perfect knowledge of native *patois*, and a will of iron" (326). Kavanagh then set to work. In Kavanagh's own words:

> I endeavoured, without exciting suspicion, to discover whether a permanent dye was procurable in the retrenchment; and, luckily for my little beauty, there was none. I obtained a complete Oriental suit by borrowing each article from separate natives; […] I was amused at my own ugliness as I carefully surveyed each feature in the glass to see that the colouring was well spread. I did not think that the shade of black was quite natural, and I felt somewhat uneasy about it, till we talked over the chances of detection, and came to the conclusion that the darkness of the night was favourable to me. Kunoujee Lal [a native collaborator] now joined us, and seemed to chuckle at the ridiculous appearance of the metamorphosed Sahib (Kavanagh 81-82).

Disguised as a "*Badmásh* – a native 'swashbuckler,' a type very common in those days" and with his "hair and his skin stained with lamp-black" – Kavanagh set out for Campbell's camp (Malleson *History* 326). After a night of adventures, near death moments and tantalizing experiences of groping in the dark and "press[ing] the soft thigh of a [native] woman," Kavanagh

successfully reached Campbell's encampment the next morning (Kavanagh 87). Alexander Ewart, then a young soldier in Campbell's column, recollected Kavanagh's sudden appearance in their camp in his 1881 memoir *The Story of a Soldier's Life*. He writes, "On this day [10 October 1857] the camp was astonished by the arrival very early in the morning of a civilian, named Kavanagh, who had made his escape from the Residency disguised as a native, accompanied by one of our spies. He had most gallantly volunteered to come out for the purpose of acting as guide to Sir Colin Campbell, and after running the most fearful risks, and having several hairbreadth escapes, contrived to reach our encampment. For this noble and daring deed the Victoria Cross was afterwards conferred upon him, an honour he well deserved for many acts of most distinguished bravery. He remained with Sir Colin most of the day, and must have given him much valuable information" (*Life* 2: 65-66).

Kavanagh became a household name after the publication of his book, *How I won the Victoria Cross*, in 1860. In the book, he narrated in great detail his adventures in racial disguise. Surprisingly, Kavanagh did not enjoy much press coverage. *The London Times* printed news (originally published in the *London Gazette*) about Kavanagh's award in 1859, without any mention of his specific exploits ('Victoria Cross'). It was only in 1882, while announcing Kavanagh's death did *The London Times* give a detailed report ('Lucknow Kavanagh').

If Kavanagh received lukewarm reception from the British press, Arminius Vámbéry was an all-round celebrity in the 1860s, and more so after the publication of his *Travels in Central Asia* in 1865. Vámbéry shot to limelight after undertaking a journey through Central Asia in disguise of a devout Islamic cleric from "Roum" [Rome or Constantinople] on pilgrimage to the

holy shrines of Khiva, Bokhara, Samarkhand, and Herat.[135] Writing about the "grounds and purposes" of this perilous expedition in his *Travels in Central Asia*, he says:

> That the Hungarian language belongs to the stock called Altaic is well known, but whether it is to be referred to the Finnish [European] or the Tartaric [Asiatic] branch is a question that still awaits decision. This inquiry, interesting to us Hungarians both in a *scientific and a national point of view*, was the principal and the moving cause of my journey to the East. I was desirous of ascertaining, by the practical study of the living languages, the […] degree of affinity [or lack of it] between the Hungarian and the Turco-Tartaric dialects […] I went first to Constantinople. Seven years' residence in Turkish houses, and frequent visits to Islamite schools and libraries, soon transformed me into a Turk — nay, into an effendi. The progress of my linguistic researches impelled me farther toward the remote East; and when I proposed to carry out my views by actually undertaking a journey to Central Asia, I found it advisable to retain this character of effendi, and to visit the East as an Oriental (vii-viii) [emphasis mine].[136]

He explains his observations in the book on "the races inhabiting Central Asia, [and their] character, usages, and customs" and detailed field notes "concerning the geography, statistics, politics, and social relations of Central Asia" as crucial for the perusal of the "scientific world."

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[135] During mid- and late- nineteenth century the Ottoman rulers were regarded by most people in Middle-East, Central Asia, and South Asia as the sultan or emperor of Rome or Roum. The reference was to the Eastern Holy Roman Empire, which passed under Ottoman control in 1453. In rebel documents from 1857, both Hindu and Muslim sepoys refer to the Ottoman Empire as the Empire of Roum [Rome] and the emperor as the Sultan of Roum. The history of the Sultanate of Rûm is of course much more complicated – it being originally a Seljuk Turkish Sultanate that stretched from 1077 to 1307. It was called Rûm because the Sultanate was established on land originally occupied by Romans. With the growth and expansion of the Ottoman Turks and their occupation of Constantinople, the Ottoman rulers were rechristened Sultans of Roum. This time it was not simply because they occupied Roman land, but for intricate political and spiritual reasons, including preservation of Eastern Christianity against Papal interdictions, that regions east of the Mediterranean regarded the Ottoman Empire as the legal heir to the Eastern Holy Roman Empire.

[136]The anxiety at the heart of Vámbéry's desire to uncouple claims regarding the "positive degree of affinity" between Asiatic languages and races with Hungarian is quite evident from his writing. It may be speculated, even, that his inclination towards Britain, and Western Europe in general, was a pathological expression against opinions that often associated Hungary, as a nation and culture, scientifically and politically, with the East.

(ibid.). However, right through these he keeps a close eye on the military organizations of the Central Asian khanates, their forts and ramparts, and Russian and Persian troop movements throughout the region.[137] There remains little doubt from reading his book that he conceived his expedition as a contribution to science as well as for gaining information about the military situation in Central Asia. In his concluding section, he not surprisingly warns Britain,

> I can never entirely realize the idea that England can behold with indifference any approach of Russia to her Indian dominions. The epoch of political Utopias is past. […] Russia still keeps silently advancing, and essential changes have taken place with respect to her frontiers on the side of Turkestan. On the western part of Central Asia – for instance, on the Sea of Aral and its shores – Russian influence has considerably increased. With the exception of the mouth of the Oxus, the entire west of the Aral Sea is recognized Russian territory […]The real line of operations is rather to be sought along the left bank of the Jaxartes. Here we find the Russian outposts supported by an uninterrupted chain of forts and walls, pushed on as far as Kale Rehim, distant thirty-two miles from Tashkend, which city may, as I have remarked, be regarded as a key to all conquests in Central Asia […]The continued progress of the Russian designs in Central Asia is then beyond all doubt. […] The question whether Russia will content herself even with Bokhara, or will allow the Oxus to become the final boundary of her influence and of her designs, is difficult to answer. […] I should like, indeed, to see the politician who would venture to affirm that Russia, once in possession of Turkestan, would be able to withstand the temptation of advancing, either personally or by her representatives, into

[137] See especially Part II of the narrative, chapters XVI- XXI for his discussion of individual states and khanates including Khiva, Bokhara, the Turkoman settlements, and Chinese Tartary. See, chapters XXIII for internal relations between these Khanates, and chapter XXIV for a discussion of Russian military progresses in the region.

Afghanistan and Northern India, where political intrigues are said to find always a fruitful soil (490-492).

A lengthy essay on the traveler and his travels in disguise of a *dervish* was published in the February 1865 issue of *All the Year Round* (hereafter, *AYTR*), a periodical Collins co-edited with Dickens. *The London Times* published a report on the traveler and his travails only three days later on 14 February 1865. Both publications are worthy of extensive analysis, since Collins given his association with the periodical and daily perusal of the *Times* may have easily found in Vámbéry another excellent model for his Murthwaite. The *ATYR* article introduces Vámbéry as 'The Hungarian Dervish,' describing him as a traveler and "studious of men's tongues and versed in divers languages of Europe and Asia" (66). *The London Times* in its report, titled rather interestingly as 'Central Asia,' describes Vámbéry as a product of European "scientific and national spirit." It writes:

> [Vámbéry] went first of all to Constantinople, where several years' residence in Turkish houses and frequent visits to Islamite schools and libraries soon transformed him into a Turk – nay, into an Effendi. In actually undertaking his journey to Central Asia he found it advisable to retain this character of Effendi, and visit the East as an Oriental. The results of his philological researches were the principle fruits of his journey, and these he intends, after mature preparation, to lay before the scientific world. These he regards as his real reward for his wanderings for months and months with only a few rags for his covering […] and in constant peril […] But with all the impediments and perils in his way he had nevertheless […] considerable qualifications for the attempt; he was, […] better acquainted with the Mahomedan ritual than any of their own Mollahs [….] ('Central Asia').

The article in the *ATYR* also mentions Vámbéry's racial 'transformation' – though a European, he "transform[ed] himself into a very good facsimile of a Turkish Efendi" – and his journey through the "wild innermost parts of Central Asia [disguised as] a holy dervish […] over paths untrodden by any European traveller" (*AYTR* 66).

Parallels between descriptions of Murthwaite's adventures in the novel – his friendship with the natives, his witnessing of native rituals, and his traveling under the disguise of a "Hindoo-Boodhist" on a perilous journey risking death and torture – and events described in Vámbéry's book are strikingly similar. So is the language and cadence of the *AYTR* article and *The London Times* report and those describing Murthwaite's journey and racial transformation in the novel. In his 'Introduction,' Vámbéry writes for example about his adventure as "a journey in which I wandered about for months and months with only a few rags as my covering, without necessary food, and in constant peril of perishing by a death of cruelty, if not of torture" (Vámbéry viii). Compare this with Murthwaite's letter to Bruff at the end of the novel. In this letter Murthwaite writes, "Since that time [1848], I have been wandering in Central Asia. Thence I have drifted back to the scene of some of my past adventures in the north and north-west of India. […] I gave myself out as a Hindoo-Boodhist, from a distant province, bound on a pilgrimage. It is needless to say that my dress was of the sort to carry out this description. Add, that I know the language as well as I know my own, and that I am lean enough and brown enough to make it no easy matter to detect my European origin – and you will understand that I passed muster with the people readily: not as one of themselves, but as a stranger from a distant part of their own country" (469-470).[138] In addition, both Vámbéry and Murthwaite pass

[138] The time frame of Murthwaite's travels 1848 to 1850, his self-description as a "semi-savage person," his linguistic skills all invoke Burton, who knew more than a few Indian languages, including Arabic, adventured in disguise of a half Arab-half Iranian, and earned the sobriquet "White Nigger" from his fellow officers. Unlike Burton however, Murthwaite does not appear keen on employing his disguise for enjoying sexual escapades with

valuable information retrieved from their sojourns in hostile regions to the imperial center, they are equally learned figures driven by scientific spirit and function as secular agents with little or no direct affiliation to the State.[139] The similarities between the fictional and real journeys are too numerous to be mentioned here and yet too evident to be ignored. For that matter, I see no reason in hesitating to suggest that Vámbéry offered Collins another template for modeling the character of Murthwaite, and in all possibilities, Collins's did use this template.[140]

Murthwaite, in my opinion, is a composite built from different historical figures such as Burton, Kavanagh, Vámbéry, and Montgomerie (and perhaps others yet to be discovered). Chakravarty, speaking of the 1890's espionage novels, contests that none of source actual historical events or characters. He states, that Kavanagh's was a "one-off venture […] and nothing like the elaborate counter-intelligence operations described" in the 1890 novels (*Indian Mutiny* 210n3). While I agree with Chakravarty, I also want to explain that I am not simply thinking of Kavanagh, Vámbéry, or Montgomerie's 'pundits' as sources for Murthwaite. Rather,

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native women. Instead, more like Vambery, he has toured Central Asia, and his interest in the indigene is limited to scientific and rational discoveries of their culture, languages, and rituals. For Burton, see, Isabel Burton, *The Life of Captain Richard F. Burton* (1893); Edward Rice, *Captain Richard Francis Burton: The Secret Agent Who Made the Pilgrimage to Mecca, Discovered the Kama Sutra, and Brought the Arabian Nights to the West* (1990). For an interesting discussion on Burton, see Roy *Indian Traffic*17-40.

[139] Interestingly, in the reports of Europeans working as spies during the Mutiny, especially in Jiwan Lal's diary, we find similar use of descriptive language and metaphors, a similar depiction of individual passion for Oriental knowledge now being used for greater national good; the individual is represented as driven by both individual and national spirit – a man of knowledge lending his personal life to serve the greater demands of history and historical necessity (I return to explicating this particular aspect involving history and the situation of the subject within it in my next chapter).

[140] Arminius Vámbéry, I believe, is one of the more plausible models available to Collins for the character of Murthwaite. Though a number of educated speculations have already been made to identify possible influences of contemporary events on Collins and the novel, I think the most evident of these, the travels of Vámbéry, has been unfortunately left out. It has been suggested that Collins used an essay from the *Notes & Quotes* while writing *The Moonstone* – 'Indo-Mahommedan Folk-lore' was published in the August 1864 volume. See, Baker 137. This particular article was the first part in a series of articles focusing on Indian culture and religion that was written by a certain H.C. (at times J.H.C.) and published in *Notes & Quotes* during 1864 to 1866. In these, he discussed Indian religions in relation to ancient Egypt and Drudical religions apart from accounts of indigenous religious practices and rituals. H.C.'s account of the relation between Indian and Egyptian religions was severely criticized by W. H. Whitworth in the January 1866 issue of *Notes & Quotes*. Sandra Kemp, in her introduction to the Penguin Classics edition of the novel, cites another source from Collins' contemporary world: the Murray Murder Case, which was published in *The London Times* on 15 July 1861. See, Kemp 'Introduction' ix; xxxi, n.13.

Murthwaite's characterization shares similarities with them; Collins's language describing Murthwaite and Murthwaite's 'own' language describing his experiences in indigene society connect the Indian traveler to these historical characters more than anything else does. Also, ideologically speaking, all these characters, Murthwaite included, represent a shift in the imperial mechanism of surveillance. They play crucial roles in retrieving and collating information. In the capacity of secular and non-military agents, they survey hostile territories lying outside the scope of official administration and surveillance for one reason or the other, thereby supplementing the archive, complementing authorial sovereignty, and acting as checks against possible unhinging of the official apparatus. Historical 'heroes' of the mutiny who endured the storm by adopting native disguises did not share any ideological agenda. For them it was a question of survival. The ideology of espionage in racial disguise is almost specific to the 1860s or the 'aftermath of the Mutiny;' and Murthwaite is a product of this period. In context of the Uprising and the debates following it around suitable modes of colonial control, Collins's novel proposes a theory of surveillance that was already in circulation in the 1860s. It is not difficult to identify how Murthwaite following Vámbéry, Kavanagh, or Montgomerie reconstitutes both imperial authority and identity. Murthwaite's 'statement' provides a closure to the polyphony of narratives and the mystery of the stone. Like Vámbéry and Montgomerie's 'Pundits,' who 'plug' vital gaps within existing knowledge, Murthwaite's account also fills gaps and leads the narrative towards a tentative closure. Furthermore, Murthwaite satiates the growing penchant within imperial Britain for stories that combined "romantic adventurism and cross-cultural impersonation" (Roy *Traffic* 17).

Before concluding, it is important to address the character of Ezra Jennings. Postcolonial critics claim that Jennings parallels Murthwaite and is more important than the latter, since he,

Jennings, aids the English plot to closure. More importantly, Upamanyu Mukherjee avers that the presence of a racially hybrid Jennings within the metropolitan space is proof of Collins's liberal sensitivities – "Jennings's body [not only] houses the sign of the colonial 'Other' [and] the feminine" but also constitutes a challenge to white, male imperial authority (read Murthwaite) in the novel (180). Even for Ashis Roy, who is most vocal in his demands to resituate Murthwaite within the equation of Collins's imperialist outlook, Jennings ultimately subverts all other authorities to emerge as the "final authority" (673). I find Mukherjee's reasoning inadequate for understanding the ideological agency of either Murthwaite or Jennings or Collins. This is because Jennings's *ressentiment* and expertise, the latter responsible for restoring the English plot, in actuality, serve a far more profound ideological function than Roy or Mukherjee accord to him or his creator Collins. Jennings is approximated within the metropolitan space only as a necessary part of the imperial archive network. I agree with Mukherjee that Jennings, a "combination of both the colonized and domestic 'other' […] resolves the crisis of respectability with a suitably subversive use of the cultural capital of knowledge" (181), but this extraordinary position serves only the greater purpose of the English plot. Mukherjee and Roy overlook how Jennings's utilitarian value redeems his place within metropolitan society like Trollope's 'hybrids.' It is only by adopting for the self such an exponentially useful role and by accepting the authority of the empire, does Jennings, or for that matter the Trollope's hybrids in Jamaica, can support the empire while finding a place for themselves within it. The Brahmins in Collins's novel by contrast cannot find any place outside of their own defunct regressive society, because they hold onto outdated histories. For that, they are a threat to the English society: they can murder for their religious beliefs, just like the sepoys of 1857. Moreover, unlike the dynamic Murthwaite who penetrates the colony with imperial bravado thereby reconstituting the virile

history of European colonization of the East, Jennings is a passive recomposer in charge of sorting out the domestic space. In other words, while Murthwaite acts as the representative of the white male colonizer charged with the dangerous task of suffering and surveying the colony, Jennings assumes a much more feminine and complementary role. He nurses the domestic space back into health and memory. Consequently, Jennings does not or cannot have the final authority in the narrative. He can only restore but not revise; he can recompose and revive but not reconstruct and realign spaces, histories, and subjectivities through active intervention. The distinct English and Indian plots, which cross path, can only be separated out of their intimate and/or mangled state through the intervention of a white man –Murthwaite. For it is not enough to resolve the crisis of the English plot that begins only in 1799 in complete ignorance of the Indian plot that evolves independently over thousand years prior to British cognition. The ancient Indian history that cursedly envelopes the British time and space must be separated. Murthwaite endures that grave responsibility. Through his cautious intervention the unfortunate conditions resulting from a collision between the synchronic English and a diachronic Indian plots are repaired.

This, of course, is the ultimate colonial ideological intervention – the diachronic history of the colony is subjected to a synchronic analysis, then it is surreptitiously co-opted, and finally aligned alongside an English plot, narrative, and history. We not only witness the *return* of the Diamond to its rightful worshippers after having been violated through centuries, but the salient reparation and completion of the diachronic structure is overseen, recorded, and archived from within the critical synchronic perspective of the colonizer. It is the final *naturalization* of ancient and medieval Indian history by, within, and through modern colonial British history. If the chasm of time remains hauntingly open at the end, it is only to caution the imperial state to act

ever more decisively and cautiously. However, the narrative (in)conclusion of the novel can be read in two *other* ways if we keep the Uprising in mind. First, we can identify the failure of surveillance at the end as articulating the impossibility of authentically representing the event of the Mutiny and/or the Other. This can, in turn, imply Collins's acknowledgment of the impossibility circumscribing the colonial venture as well as the enterprise, his and others, of writing about the Mutiny. The novel, then, is one of *another* attempt at representing the event, one more stab at representing the complexities and anxieties of the Uprising by *other means*. Murthwaite's statement – "My object in following the Indian plot, step by step, is to trace results back, by rational means, to natural causes" – can be appended to Kaye, Malleson, or Holloway's historical works on the Mutiny as a more than fit epigraph describing imperial desires for objectively investigating the real causes of the Mutiny. Alternatively, we can focus on Murthwaite's successful intrusion into the 'heart of darkness' in disguise of a native in relation to an incipient ideological agenda for *surveillance by other means*. Within the contexts of political debates around colonial control as well as a cultural desire for sensational stories of espionage and racial impersonations, the novel satisfies imperial metropolitan anxieties in the aftermath of the revolt.

CHAPTER III

Menacing Desire: Sexuality, Zenana, and the Rebellious 'Rane' in Colonial Mutiny Fiction.

"I can't trust myself to write calmly about that [Ilbert] 'Bill' old stagers say that race feeling has never run so high since the Mutiny. If there should be a rising, the present Government are directly responsible at least so every one says."

[Kipling *The Letters* 35].[141]

"I have addressed meetings of men in various parts of the country, and have besought them as humbly as I could possibly do to help India. I now have the honour to make an urgent yet humble appeal to you Englishwomen […] I sincerely and earnestly call upon you to do all in your power to effect the elevation of Hindu women […] to embark on the grand and noble enterprise of […] mak[ing] Indian women good wives, mothers, sisters, and daughters […] I speak to you not for fifty, but for millions of Indian sisters, whose lamentations and wails penetrate the skies […]."

[Keshub Chunder Sen 'Women In India' 364-65].[142]

"In Hindu society, there are *satis* [i.e. pure women] in every home, the Hindu society has marked out various rules and regulations whereby it becomes possible for a Hindu woman to preserve her chastity; on the other hand, there are unchaste women in many English homes. A nation that has not comprehended that a woman loses her womanliness without chastity […] we can hardly concede that such a nation is truly civilized or that it has genuinely progressed."

[Anon. 'Ingrejer Parastri Gaman'].[143]

[141] Kipling, Letter to Cromwell Price, dated 1 June 1883.
[142] Keshub Chunder Sen's lecture 'Women in India' was presented at the Victoria Discussion Society in London on August 1, 1870.
[143] 'Ingrejer Parastri Gaman' or 'Adultery among the English' was published anonymously in 1891 during the Age of Consent debates in the vernacular periodical *Janmabhumi*. Qtd. in Chaudhuri *Frail Hero* 88n4.

I

The 1880s and the 1890s saw a resurgence of interest in the Indian Mutiny in Britain with as many as nineteen mutiny fictions being published in a span of just twenty years.[144] Significant among these are a set of novels that focus on the life and rebellion of the queen of Jhansi or the Rani of Jhansi, Lakshmi Bai. These novels – John Maclean's *The Rane: A Legend of the Indian Mutiny* (1887), Hume Nisbet's *The Queen's Desire* (1893), J.E. Muddock's *The Star of Fortune* (1894), Alexander Rogers's *The Rani of Jhansi* (1895), and Michael White's *Lachmi Bai* (1901) – are noteworthy for two reasons. First, they set the stage for an enduring fascination with the Oriental queen in western imagination, and, second, these articulate anxiety over the Mutiny as disruptive of established gender identities. In this chapter, I look at two of these novels, John Maclean's *The Rane* (1887) and Hume Nisbet's *The Queen's Desire* (1893), to demonstrate how concerns over political rebellion map onto late- Victorian societal anxieties about (queer) sexuality.

An inquiry into Victorian figurations of the rebel Rani is especially important for understanding twentieth-century representations of the queen in European and South Asian literature. Compared to postcolonial Indian representations of her as a martyr and iconic figure of "female heroism," twentieth-century western imaginations are at best unstable. In these, she is at times a seductress, her sexual charms more threatening than her political ambitions, and, at other times, the "sacred feminine." In some instances she is a "rebel against her will," a victim of European colonial policies, while in others she is a sly manipulator, conspiring to murder

[144] In referencing the number of works published between 1880 and 1900, I am following the list given by Shailendra Dhari Singh. See, Singh *Novels* 230-231. But it is possible more than twenty were published. For a more recent bibliography, see Gupta.

innocent Europeans *en masse*.[145] I do not have the space here to enter into a discussion on the relation between colonial and postcolonial representations of the queen. However, my discussion of late- Victorian figurations of the queen will point out some salient aspects common to both imperial and postcolonial (Western and South Asian) representations of the rebel Rani.

Existing scholarship, including Jenny Sharpe's *Allegories of Empire* (1993) and Nancy Paxton's *Writing the Raj* (1999), identify the Rani novels as belonging intrinsically to the late-Victorian cultural exercise of constructing hetero-normative gender identities in response to social demands of New Imperialism. Anxieties articulated in the Rani novels, Sharpe and Paxton show, reflect domestic concerns about androgyny, transsexuality, cross-dressing, and homosexuality in late- Victorian England. I want to move here from the issue of Victorian panic over 'deviant' sexuality towards the investigation of a set of interrelated questions that have remained unaddressed in the studies done by Sharpe and Paxton; questions that are specific to the situation of the Rani novels at the intersections of Britain's colonial and domestic contexts.[146] Namely, how the Mutiny acts as a successful template for disciplining sexual identity and (re)constructing gender roles; and, what is the relation between anxieties about the Mutiny (a political/colonial problem) and those over deviant/transgressive sexuality (a social/domestic concern)? My central contention is this: The figure of the Rani in mutiny novels symptomatically

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[145] See, for e.g. M.M. Kaye's *The Shadow of the Moon* (1957); John Masters *The Nightrunners of Bengal* (1966); George M. Fraser's *Flashman in the Great Game* (1975); Michel De Grece, *La Femme Sacrée* (1984); Rainer Jerosch, *Die Rani von Jhansi - Rebellin wider Willen* (2003); and Julian Rathbone, *Mutiny* (2007). Fraser's novel was serially published in the September, October, and November issues of the Men's magazine, 'Playboy.' Two of the most famous Indian works on the queen are Mahasweta Debi's novel *Jhansir Rani* (Bengali; 1956) and Subhadra Kumari Chauhan's poem 'Jhansi Ki Rani' (Hindi, c. 1930). For an interesting study on the Rani and the concept of female heroism in India, see Lebra-Chapman.

[146] Late-Victorian concern with deviant sexuality is reflected in the passing of the Labouchere Act in 1885 which made homosexuality a criminal offence punishable with up to two years imprisonment. The act was appended to the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1885 that addressed sex crimes amongst young women and prostitutes. Oscar Wilde was charged with the Labouchere Act in 1895. For a discussion on surveillance of homosexuality and other forms of sexually deviant acts in Victorian England, see Davis. For 19th century scientific discourses on sexuality and Victorian constructions of a national imaginary through the masculine body as a site of self-control, see Conway and also Mosse.

enunciates a Victorian consciousness apprehensive about the impossibility of arresting, authorizing, and hegemonizing shifting symbolic orders at both colonial and national levels as well as at the intersections of the domestic and the colonial spectrums. The Rani novels perform the task of suturing this anxiety through narratives that address concerns over political unrest alongside anxieties about sexuality. In effect, these narratives reveal an interesting ideological and cultural negotiation with colonial politics, on the one hand, and domestic digressions, on the other. In sum: these novels do not merely present the disciplining of itinerant sexual energies in context of the traumatic collective memory of the Indian Mutiny, but reveal Victorian cultural anxieties over acts, political or sexual, threatening hetero-normative imaginaries of imperial sovereignty. I will argue through a close reading of the Rani novels that anxieties about belligerent insurrections overturning political hegemony and anxiety over deviant/transgressive sexualities threatening established gender binaries share an isomorphic relation. This is essentially so since both forms of transgression result in, at least according to popular opinion, a disappearance of difference and/or signifiers of difference.

Ellie Ragland in *Jacques Lacan and the Philosophy of Psychoanalysis* observes that the foundation of the social/symbolic order rests on sexual difference, and a collapse of markers signifying this difference leads to the breakdown of imaginary ideas about the self and the social. I will take this idea of a constitutive difference structuring the individual and the social as my theoretical point of departure to pursue a reading of the juxtaposition of the sexual and the political, the domestic alongside the colonial, in the Rani novels. Before entering into a discussion of the novels let me briefly summarize a few theoretical points that will help to better ground my analysis of the relation between *fin-de-siècle* domestic anxieties and late-Victorian memory of the uprising.

The symbolic order, Lacan explains, is founded around a signifier of difference that in itself is absent from the symbolic order. The "name" for this absent signifier in Lacan is the *phallus*. The phallus according to Lacan, we should remind ourselves, is not an organ, but "the signifier" that designates "meaning effects" and constitutes the symbolic order ('Signification' *Ecrits* 579). In *Seminar XX*, Lacan explains further that the phallus as a signifier is missing or absent from discourse primarily because it has "no signified" (*Feminine Sexuality* 81). Bruce Fink clarifies this peculiar "situation" of the phallus when he writes that the phallus as a signifier is "an exception […] for it is the signifier of that which is *not* included in […] the set of all signifiers" (*Lacan* 140). In other words, the symbolic order rests on *the* missing or absent signifier, though its absence is filled by *other* signifiers. Lacan calls these *other* or substitute signifiers as "objet petit a;" and identifies them as the object cause of desire. At the same time, Lacan cautions that subjective interactions with these objects are essentially fantastic, subjective identity derived qua these objects are imaginary, and knowledge produced through the mediation of these objects false. In *Seminar XVII*, he categorically terms these *other* signifiers as they constitute the idiomatic core of all human knowledge as fiction. The veiling of the absence/gap is however crucial since human encounter with the absence or Real, i.e., the truth of the absence as Real, provokes psychosis – "reason degenerates into a blind self-destructive skepticism, in short, into total irrationalism" thereby leading to the collapse of discourse (Zizek 'Thrilling' 62). The other signifiers are therefore responsible for sustaining the human subject as a subject of desire.

How does this theoretical map help us in understanding late-Victorian anxieties about the breakdown of the socio-political order through insurgency and deviant sexuality? One possible answer is this: Apprehensions about political and sexual transgressions stem from the threat posed by these to formal imaginaries of a specific mode of institutionalized hegemony as

historically absolute (British imperialism) and a map of sexual identities (heterosexuality) as fixed. We can argue that fixities grounding political and hetero-normative social orders, that is, say colonialism as History and gender roles as divinely ordained, are products of misrepresented knowledge. Such fictional compositions, being at best imperfect negotiations with the essential condition of the missing signifier, are perpetually apprehensive of disruptions and/or deviations, thereby rendering constant monitoring of and frequent recasting of normative socio-political positions necessary through force as well as ideological apparatuses. My discussion of the Rani novels will illustrate this theoretical proposition by historically contextualizing the two narratives in relation to post-Mutiny concerns over political disruptions and *fin-de-siècle* anxieties about sexuality. This will also explain why anxious reactions to the Indian Uprising of 1857, and/or conflict situations more generally, assume the character of a sexual fantasy – the fantasy of *our* women being raped and the violent reactionary raping of *their* women in consequence.[147]

II

The Ambivalent Queen

John Maclean's *The Rane*, like most mutiny romances, has a long meandering plot involving romance, drama, suspense, betrayal, treachery, and all the regular staples of mutiny narratives including massacre of innocent Europeans by the rebels, the disconcerting rumors about *chapattis*, the cartridge controversy, adventures of Europeans in native disguise etc. In short, Maclean's novel has all the dramatic qualities that according to Hilda Gregg explain the Victorian public's fascination with the "mutiny in literature": "valour and heroism, cruelty and

[147] I am here also thinking of sex crimes committed during wars and other forms of internecine and sectarian violence. The Other women in all such situations become sites for restituting the imaginary of power via rape. Examples abound – from recent day conflict in the Balkans to the infamous Partition of the Indian subcontinent. Outside of conflict situations as well, the Other is primarily a sexually threatening Other from whom *our* women must be protected. For a recent discussion, see Friedland 'Religious Terror.' In British post-mutiny discourses, anxiety over the rape of European women by the irascible natives is a common cause of concern. For a discussion, see Paxton. Also, Sharpe.

treachery, sharp agony and long endurance" (Gregg 'Indian Mutiny' 218-219). What distinguishes Maclean's novel from the rest, however, are the repeated references to the queen's ambivalent sexual identity. The narrative is obsessed with questions about the queen's gender and sexuality – is she a man, a woman, or a masculine woman-thing? References to the Rani's sexuality in the novel function, as I show below, as a metanarrative explaining the greater narrative of the Mutiny – the queen's volatile identity and personality as representative of and responsible for the Mutiny.[148]

The queen, however, is not presented as wholly evil as we encounter for instance in Charles Ball's writings. Instead, she is portrayed as a victim of the intemperate actions of the East India Company and only somewhat a creature of her own nature. Like historians of the Mutiny such as John Kaye and George Malleson before him, Maclean strongly believes that the East India Company's mistreatment of the queen was responsible for transforming her into a radically evil person.[149] The queen, he writes, "bore a character better known for evil than for good," but it was the "treatment she had undergone" due to the Company's unjust policies that

[148] The Rani's transgressive sexuality and political ambitions, i.e. the threat she poses to imperial rule and masculinity, reminds one of Ayesha from Rider Haggard's *She* also published in 1887. In Haggard's novel, we witness anxieties over Ayesha's transgressive feminine sexuality and political ambition. Both of these fuse interestingly with another set of anxieties, those over reverse colonization and corruptive feminine/working class insurrection. One of the concerns in the novel is Ayesha's political ambition – she wanted to dislodge the queen and proclaim herself and her beloved as sovereigns of England! In mutiny fictions, the Rani is a similar figure – sexually aggressive and politically ambitious, she transcends gender norms at every step. For a discussion of how fiction of the late 80s and 90s attempted to address various anxieties over nation, race, colony, gender, sexuality, and labor, see Arata.

[149] George Malleson, writing in the late 1870s and 1880s, has little hesitation in addressing the Rani as a "high-spirited lady." In his *History of the Indian Mutiny 1857-1859*, Malleson regrets the "personal indignity" the queen had to suffer due to the high-handed governance of Dalhousie. See, Malleson I: 183. John Kaye also notes that in the case of Jhansi, the "Government were guilty of […] extraordinary meanness" in their interactions with the widowed Rani. Kaye III: 360. Compare these with Ball's accounts where the queen is held culpable for the deaths of innocent Europeans during the siege of Jhansi (Ball II: 290).

developed "the evil that was in her, [more] than the good" (*Rane* 15-16).[150] A victim of the Company's insidious policies:

> [t]here remained and rankled in her breast […] a deep feeling of discontent and hatred to those whom she considered had defrauded her of her rights, and, though outwardly assuming an appearance of acquiescence in her fate, her constant thoughts were for some opportunity of avenging herself, and throwing off fealty and subjection to the British rule (ibid. 43).

And it is this very temperament of the Rani – her ability to appear sympathetic to the British while yearning deeply to seek revenge against the administration – that interests Maclean most in the legend of the rebel queen. He assiduously attempts to unravel the queen's "repressed" desire to overthrow British rule by "reading" ominous details of her "delicate" features. Her face,

> once seen, it would be difficult to forget, with jet-black liquid eyes, fringed with long sweeping eyelashes; a forehead giving promise of intelligence and determination; a beautifully chiseled aquiline nose, and a small exquisitely shaped mouth, but one which, *if closely observed and studied*, would give the idea that its possessor could be cruel and unsparing under circumstances where she was opposed or thwarted [would] lead an attentive physiognomist to form an opinion that she would be hard and unsparing if thwarted or opposed in her wishes and desires [my emphasis] (ibid. 22-23; 48).

However, it is not only the Rani's face that evokes anxiety. Her unusual clothes and an array of deadly weapons carried on her person ominously hybridize the beauty of her youthful

[150] The particular policy in question here is, of course, the (in)famous 'Doctrine of Lapse,' which stated that a native princely state under the Company's protectorate was to pass under the direct rule of the Company if the sovereign died without a legal, implying biological, male heir. This policy conflicted with the age-old practice of adoption pursued by many princely states and led to wide spread discontent. The Doctrine of Lapse and the annexation of native states princely states of Satara (1848), Jaitpur and Sambalpur (1849), Nagpur and Jhansi (1854) and Awadh (Oudh) (1856) by Lord Dalhousie have been identified by historians as one of the main causes of the Indian Uprising.

feminine body. Maclean directs the imperial gaze at this curious hybrid object as she sits at a distance in a secret room within her palace in Ranepore with other conspirators. Even at a distance, she excites trepidation in the hearts of the readers:

> At one end of the room, Rane Luchme Bhie sat on a charpoy […] Her dress, though that of a woman, was not the ordinary costume generally worn by females of her class and position in life. […] Her bodice, freely opened in front, showed a well-shaped voluptuous bust, and terminated at the waist, which was tightly drawn in by a belt worked over and embroidered with gold, and in it were ostentatiously stuck two elaborately-carved, silver-mounted pistols, of Damascus make, together with a small but elegantly shaped 'pashe kubs,' or hand dagger, the point of which, it was whispered, had been dipped in a subtle poison, whereby a wound, however slight, must prove fatal. Instead of the usual cloth, or petticoat, she wore a pair of loose trousers, from which protruded two small, prettily rounded, bare feet […] (ibid. 47-48).

And if this clothed body, within which feminine sensuality overlaps with the dangerous "pashe kubs," is anxiety-provoking, then, her 'unveiled' body is even more so. Maclean describes a midnight meeting between Shakespear, the British political agent, and the Rani as putting the former, "to use a somewhat American expression, 'in a fix.'" "His beautiful companion's touch and near proximity," writes Maclean, "sent a thrill of feeling through his whole body, and she was, as it appeared to him, fast gaining a magnetic influence over him, such as an electro-biologist obtains over the will of a person submitting himself or herself to him" (ibid. 25).

These and similar descriptions of the rebel queen in the first fifty pages of the novel give us an idea about anxieties experienced by the British administration during and in the wake of the uprising. Given the massive failure of the British administration to preempt or identify signs

of the rebellion in the years before the outbreak, and their complete inability during the unrest to distinguish between friend and foe, the Rani serves as a metaphor for the Mutiny. Like the uprising that in most mid- and late- Victorian accounts is represented as having started without any warning, the Rani's position in the conflict was unknown till it was very late. The resident at Jhansi was unsure about where her sympathies lay. For, as Kaye notes, "if she [the Rani] had any evil dispositions, she knew when to restrain the exhibition of them" under her sweet seductive demeanor (Kaye III: 361). Fooled by their reliance on the native sepoys as much as by their "friendly" allies like the queen of Jhansi and Nana Sahib, post-Mutiny imperial narratives are riddled with anxieties and articulate the need for extra-modal avenues of surveillance. In Maclean, this desire takes the form of his keen physiognomic researches on the queen's face. The "science" of physiognomy in the novel is not called in to consolidate essentialist constructions of the Oriental character, but to bridge the gap opened up by the *sudden* uprising between administrative knowledge and vernacular dispensations. Like the mysterious *chapattis* whose circulation puzzled the administration and raked up "panic of knowledge and power," the queen's ambivalent disposition generated another "ambiguous area of engagement" beyond British knowledge of "ethnic or cultural binarisms" forcing upon them the need for devising newer strategies to counter the threat of the indigene (Bhabha 'Bread' *Location* 292).

Zenana and the Paradox of Colonial Anxiety

The queen as disruptive of established knowledge, and especially the danger posed by her unveiling in front of a male stranger (and foreigner) in complete disregard of "all rules of etiquette" (*Rane* 23), exposes the paradox of one of the central fantasies of colonialism: the fantasy of the Other women as helpless, isolated within the harem, and requiring the active intervention of the colonizer to gain freedom. The harem or zenana, Malek Alloula reminds us,

is the "fertilizer of the colonial vision;" one of those fictional bulwarks grounding and guiding the vision of colonialism as History.[151] It is the governing phantasm that mists the mercantile character of colonialism with the aura of romance, adventure, and duty of rescuing the hapless Other women from the oppression of the colonized men (Alloula 4). Phantasms such as the harem and the Sati, Spivak points out, functioned in colonial discourse to justify the imagined duty of the colonizer of 'saving brown women from brown men' ('Subaltern'). In other words, the harem is the signifier grounding the alterity of the Other as oppressive, decadent, despotic etc. It lexicalizes the colonized as an Other through the production of a theory about the vernacular (in this case, the zenana) and serves to reproduce the colonizer as a Self inverse to that Other.

Where is the paradox in this? Plainly put, the paradox lies in the impossibility of the very action – saving brown women – that forms the idiomatic core of this fantasy. To put it differently, the oppressive structure and regimen of the zenana cannot be dismantled through active intervention of the colonizer. The presence of the zenana is integral to the fantasy of colonialism as History; and as such, it cannot be overturned. The unfettered continuance of the zenana as an oppressive space is critical because it supports the imaginary discourse of alterity and constitutes, in effect, the symbolic figuration of intervention, transgression, and retrieval of what is hidden in the zenana (and barred to the colonizer) as duty. In this context, any description of the Other woman as different, i.e., not docile but masterful, compromises the structure of the fantasy and its support of colonialism as liberatory and/or progressive. The paradox is, therefore,

[151] I use the words *harem* and *zenana* interchangeably in this paper. Zenana is an Urdu word designating the inner chambers of a house where women stay as opposed to the outer chambers, *Mardana*, where the *mard* or men meet. Structurally and epistemologically, the zenana meant to the colonizers in the context of South Asia what the harem meant to them in relation to the Middle East – a space isolating the native women from the outer world.

simply a question of whether to look or not to look (at the truth).[152] In British consciousness and collective memory, the image of the Rani and anxieties about her disruptive agency in dismantling established imperial knowledge is inextricably tied up with the phantasmic space of the harem, specifically with the queen's dynamic use of and negotiation with this space. Let me elaborate on this.

The Zenana, the Other, & Enjoyment

The image of the Other woman commanding a war against the greatest empire on earth from the interiors of the zenana both fascinated and vexed the colonizer's imaginary. Most commonly though it evoked anxieties as a result of the overturning of the primary discourses about colonized women qua the architectonics of the zenana. Discussions on the active role played by colonized women during the Mutiny almost always bring up the question of the zenana. A special correspondent report published in the *London Times* a month after the Rani's death states,

> Women have been our most formidable foes in this struggle. They have ascendancy over men and the art of ruling in the Zenana. The Ranee of Jhansi and the Begum [of Oudh] were braver and better leaders than any rebel leader [and] displayed a devotion, energy of character, and perseverance which none of the other sex have exhibited ('British Army').

Similarly, William Russell, the English war-reporter who was embedded with the counter-insurgency columns during the Mutiny, writes admiringly about the begum (queen) of Lucknow Hazrat Mahal. In his *Diary* Russell calls her the "presiding genius" and brain behind the "defense" of the city. He then theorizes why colonial women have suddenly become such formidable foes. "It appears, from the energetic character of these Ranees and Begums that they

[152] This, of course, includes the question of 'how to look.' For a brilliant discussion of the harem and its phantasmic vision within colonialism, see Alloula. For a discussion on the significance and strategies of 'looking,' see Grosrichard.

acquire in their zenanas and harems, a considerable amount of actual mental power, and, at all events, become able *intriguantes*. Their contests for ascendancy over the minds of the men give them vigour and acuteness to their intellect" (*Diary* 59, 72).[153]

In post-mutiny discourses, the zenana as the fantastic Other space – as the place of the Other's sexual enjoyment and a site of oppression – assumes another significant quality. It becomes the dark conspiratorial space threatening the empire. British mutiny fictions present the zenana as the place where rebels congregate in secret to plan the Uprising. In Maclean's novel, for example, the closed interiors of the Ranepore palace is a place of intrigue, conspiracy, and death presided over by the equally intimidating person of the queen. The palace, like its regal inhabitant, is beautiful from the outside but murky in the inside. Secret passageways crisscross the palace building and lead to secret chambers where murderous conspiracies are hatched. The anxiety over the inner chambers of Ranepore palace and the insidious queen finds its culminating expression in the novel when the queen plots to murder all the British officers of the town by poisoning their food during a dinner-discussion at her palace about the "evidently increasingly disturbed state of affairs in the surrounding country" (*Rane* 42). The deadly poison itself comes from the innermost and secluded room in the palace – the Rani's *boudoir* – where she keeps her collection of poisons hidden. The plot, though eventually compromised due to the conscientious actions of the Rani's personal attendant Gunga who substitutes the white poison with an innocuous white powder, strongly reinforces the imperial anxiety about the inability to discern the queen's hidden character (ibid. 78-109).

The overlapping of sexual and political concerns explicates the essential character of the harem as an 'empty space' within colonial imagination. In other words, the harem is devoid of

[153] One must note here the imperial strategy that showed greater admiration of Indian women to Indian men, especially in context of governance thereby establishing the necessity of colonial rule by competent, virile European men. See, Mill's *Subjection* for example.

any affective qualities except those attributed to or inscribed on it in relation to colonialism's historical encounters with the Other. Therefore, it is not surprising that with the growth of political concerns in the wake of the Mutiny, the harem should acquire a political perspective. In this context, the desire to probe the zenana was re-presented as a political necessity and the colonial gaze was repositioned vis-à-vis a military ethical stance. The colonizer's gaze now 'probed' the zenana not simply as the space of sexual enjoyment but as a space where conspiracies were hatched. But it gazed nonetheless.

This inter-weaving of spatial meanings can be understood in psychoanalytic terms as well. The similarity between concerns with political conspiracy and sexual enjoyment that is barred to the colonizer can be identified as lying on the same associative plane in the colonizer's consciousness and/or fantasy. Both concerns articulate anxiety over what is outside the scope of knowledge, experience, and surveillance. Conspiracy as discourse is similar to discourses about the harem as the space of the Other's distinct sexual enjoyment. Both presume the presence of an Other of the Other of which nothing is known. Or, the Other has recourse to an Other who aids him/her in the rebellion, just as the Other has access to an enjoyment that is barred to me![154] That is to say, the Other has recourse to something, (the enigmatic Freudian *das Ding*), which is distinctively its own and inaccessible to the colonizer. The zenana as the "empty space" functions to organize the imaginary of this precinct as an absolute site for sexual enjoyment; or, as in the context of the Mutiny, a conspiratorial space. Either way, the zenana threatens the

[154] The simplest example of this conspiratorial fantasy with the existence of an Other beyond the Other can be found in the common-place notion that select secret organizations control governments world-wide. This argument presupposes the presence of a group of people who control world politics and economy independent of any sovereign control. These are the Other operational behind the Other [my national government] and responsible for the war in Darfur to the 9/11 disaster, the flood in China to the staging of moon landing. Lacan categorically mentions that there is no Other to the Other except in paranoia. See, Lacan *Seminar III*. But a different argument can be established here as well. Recalling Agamben, it can be noted that a state cannot be a State in affective terms unless it has a monopoly of secrets. But, again, these secrets cannot be secrets unless everyone enjoys and/or knows them. I have worked this argument out in detail in my article on Haneke's 2005 film *Cache*. See, Basu Thakur 'Suture.'

colonizer with death – the harem as sexual space with moral and/or sexual degeneration through disease and the harem as conspiratorial space with rebellion. These two aspects of the zenana also reveal the cause of imperial anxiety during the Mutiny over indigenous forms of knowledge and their dissemination/communication through apparently innocuous material objects like the *chapatti*.

John Lang's travelogue, *Wanderings in India*, first published in serialized form in Charles Dickens's *Household Words* between November 1857 and February 1858, and as a book in 1861, presents an interesting exposition of this fusing of colonial anxieties over the Rani's sexuality and her radical use of the zenana for gaining political advantages.

Lang was a young Australian lawyer travelling through India when he was invited by the Rani in 1854 to represent her case to the Court of Directors in London. Describing his first meeting with the young widowed queen, Lang writes that the Rani was seated behind *purdah*. Then, "whether it was by accident, or by design on the Ranee's part, I know not, my curiosity was gratified. The curtain was drawn aside […] It was only for a moment it is true; still I saw her sufficiently to be able to describe her" (Lang 93). The passage displays a typical Orientalist fantasy at work – the Other woman reveals, however momentarily, a glimpse of her veiled face as if to allure the colonizer. But the tone soon shifts to anxiety as the Rani, perchance anticipating Lang's thoughts, tells him that she hopes "a sight of her had not lessened [his] sympathy with her sufferings nor prejudiced her cause" (Lang 94). Lang is left wondering whether there was some purpose behind the accidental drawing of the *purdah*.

An interesting parallel can be drawn between Lang's account and Maclean's description of the midnight meeting between the Rani and the British political agent Shakespear. In the novel, the Rani steps out of the zenana and unveils her face to seduce Shakespear in writing a

report against the annexation of her state. Her transgression of custom and conscious use of sexuality is again purposefully directed at gaining political advantage. But most interestingly, her dissent against a specific instance of geopolitical domination, the British occupation of Jhansi and the dispossession of the widowed queen, articulates and registers itself at a universal level in this scene. For pleading her case to Shakespear she says: "Sir, in the name of justice, in remembrance of your mother, your sister, or perhaps of one dearer to you than either, in far-off 'Wilayat [England],' renounce your unjust determination to injure a helpless woman, and deprive her of her rights!" (*Rane* 22-26; 24). The queen voices dissent not only against British annexation of Jhansi, but against all forms of unjust injuries extended to women and the dispossessed in England as well as India by patriarchal and imperial forces.

In both Lang and Maclean's accounts, the Rani's self-possession and calculated use of her sexuality rupture the colonizer's fantasy about colonized women as helpless, demure, oppressed, and isolated from History. Her movements between the inside and the outside create a crisis in the colonial administration as they struggle to make sense of her actions. The schism that appears between the femininity of her "voluptuous bust," the "delicately-formed, warm, trembling," "small well-shaped hand[s]" and her aggressive assertion of rights establish a gap between the visual and the experienced, between the sign and its significative circulation. The *purdah* consequently remains no more the sign of Oriental oppression; instead, as in Lang's account, it materializes as something more sinister. It can be used to titillate the colonizer into submission, or worse, as in Maclean's novel, facilitate secret planning of a rebellion away from the surveying gaze of the administration. The anxiety here is not over what the veil or the *purdah* hides, but rather about what it speaks. Or what is spoken behind it but cannot be heard. Anxiety, at one level, is over the surfacing of exclusive jouissance of the Other. And as long as this

jouissance exists in terms of sex, only accessible through fantasy, it is fine. But the moment it transforms into language or sex as language, as we see in Lang's narrative, problems begin to appear. Language assumes its own direction and gains in the course of circulation its own message. Such language constitutes a material threat – of conspiracy (the speech) escaping the walls of the zenana and inspiring the masses. It is precisely this danger that Malleson drew attention to when he wrote of the Rani coming out of the zenana and influencing the masses to rebellion with her own unflagging personal energy and speech –

> Into every act of her government she threw all the energy of a strong and resolute character. Possessing considerable personal attractions, being young, vigorous, and *not afraid to show herself to the multitude*, she gained a great influence over the hearts of her people. It was this influence, this force of character, added to a splendid and inspiring courage, that enabled her some months later to offer to the English troops, under Sir Hugh Rose, a resistance which, made to a less able commander, might even have been successful [my emphasis] (Malleson I: 191).

Anxiety is over the word that is segregated from the established symbolic apparatus of the colonial regime. Anxiety is about speech that is inexplicable except as nonsense – the Babel of native tongues – dispersing the traditional divisions of the colonial space as envisioned by the imperial administration and consequently jeopardizing administrative control (Bhabha 'Articulating' *Location* 177). The anxiety is over failing to decipher signs of the Mutiny circulating in the open! The zenana and the *purdah* secluding the inner chambers represent all those inexplicable indigenous localisms – language, culture, customs – that the British failed to penetrate and which came back to haunt them during the Mutiny. The Other woman as an object of colonial fantasy in consequence melts into an anxiety-provoking thing – the devouring Other

woman-thing – encapsulating within it anxieties about 1857 as thoroughly destructive of imperial ambitions, knowledge, and fantasies.

III

Desire and Historical Necessity: *The Queen's Desire*

Dangers posed by the Rani's transgressions to British imperial rule and masculinity are further explored in Hume Nisbet's suggestively titled 1893 mutiny novel *The Queen's Desire*. Written at the height of New Imperialism, this novel like most other works published during the decade is a site of "heroic [masculine] imperial adventure" dotted with "conspicuous demonstrations of racial superiority" (Chakravarty *Indian Mutiny* 17). Nisbet's novel, however, adds one more agenda to this framework in the form of disciplining sexuality. The story revolves around Sergeant George Jackson, a British hero of humble lower-class origins, who finds himself drawn into a sexual conspiracy during the Uprising. Early on in the novel, the Rani falls in love with Jackson and decides to spare him from the fate of his compatriots who were being killed mercilessly by the rebels. To protect Jackson she imprisons him in zenana during the Mutiny. Having thus sheltered her beloved from the brutal war raging outside, she showers him with all the pleasures imaginable to a man, sexual and material, and even promises to make him her king once the Mutiny is over and all the Europeans in India are killed. Jackson enjoys his special treatment for a while, but then grows weary and starts to feel guilty about hiding out while his fellow soldiers were fighting outside for "Queen and country." He escapes the zenana, rejoins his regiment and his European fiancé, before finally killing the Rani in battle.

Indrani Sen notes that the "textual strategies of representation" in the novel are "directed at disempowering the warrior rani;" erasing the legendary stories about her martiality by showing her as an overly sensual and promiscuous character ('Inscribing' 266-267). The Rani,

she says, poses a threat to the fabric of British racial and masculine superiority. The drama in the novel, consequently, is linked to the male hero's ability to overcome and escape from being swallowed by her desire. To this argument, one must add the idea of History and Historical Necessity. The disciplining of feminine sexuality and constructions of masculinity and racial superiority are presented in the novel through the hero's assertion of martiality against Oriental seductive chicanery, on the one hand, and as a response to the call of History, on the other. Schematically put, in the texts under discussion, imperial panic over the Rani's sexual and political transgressions are directly related to the apprehension of being engulfed by the Other's articulation of desire. The Rani's character and actions confront the administration with enigmatic gestures that elude the formal grid of imperial knowledge about indigenous culture. Viewed through a Lacanian lens, then, these texts express unease of imperial sovereignty (political, racial, cultural, and gender) being dispersed by the Other's inscrutable desire (to renounce colonial hegemony). Anxiety here is in the horror of encountering the Real of the Other's jouissance and the consequent erasure of the (imaginary) self (Lacan *Seminar XVII* qtd. in Fink *Lacanian* 56-57). It is the horror of not knowing why the colonized refuses the benefits of a "progressive" European rule. The colonized's desire effectively appears devoid of reason; the mutiny is nonsense with no real or material causes as many imperial writers noted. Faith in colonialism as historically destined, and as a vision of duty to reform and civilize the ignorant colonized, is the only refuse against such an overwhelming tide of the Other's desire. Participation in this imaginary vision is the only avenue to reconstitute endangered imperial sovereignty. Jackson in Nisbet's novel accordingly relinquishes security and enjoyment offered by the Rani to don the mantle of a true soldier in a time of acute Historical Need. History was outside, in the field of battle, where it was being made, shaped, and protected by British soldiers

against regressive Asiatic miscreancy. The zenana by contrast was a space stuck in time, unaffected by the travails of the outer world and immersed in the pleasures of the flesh. Jackson as a man chooses History over individual security and enjoyment. It is this ideological mooring of Nisbet's story around the zenana, that is, the assertion of British Historical identity against sexual enjoyment of the Other woman, or, History as a defense against the Other's menacing desire, which makes it an interesting narrative for my purposes here.

Homeostasis of Satisfaction

The Rani first meets Jackson in Delhi before the outbreak of the Mutiny, after Jackson intervenes and stops a group of drunken British soldiers from molesting the queen. The Rani's appearance in this scene, her first in the novel, is both dramatic and tenebrous. Accosted on her way to the Red fort in disguise of a "nautch-girl," she at first appears helpless to prevent the soldiers from causing harm. But then as her attendants recoil and shriek in horror trying to escape from the "ravishing hands" of the "Tommies," she steps out of her palanquin with a "naked tulwar" in hand (*Desire* 9). It is this ambivalent figure, sensual yet armed with a "sharp and wicked" weapon, which draws Jackson's (and the reader's) attention to her.

> A striking figure she is in her rich nautch-dress with its flashing jewels and the gold-spangled gauze veil which floats about her on the night air; tall, lithe, rounded and youthful, with perfect symmetry of out-line, and majestic even in her rapid motions, she does not speak a word as she stands the centre of that admiring circle, who are men, even if rude ones, […] they stand round her gaping […] (ibid. 9-10).

What follows is more striking. As one of the molesters "makes a dive forward," unconcerned about her sword, the "[n]ext instant his headless trunk falls almost at her feet, while the head spins like a football some yards away […]" (ibid. 10). It is at this tense moment, when the

"sudden tragedy" changes the "spirit of fun into the thirst for vengeance," that Jackson intervenes and 'rescues' the Rani. The Rani is immediately fascinated by the "stately figure" of Jackson, who is unaware of her royal identity, and leaves him with a precious ring as a token of her gratitude (ibid. 10-11). Later in the novel, we find a more unnerving description of the Rani when she seduces Jackson, professing her unflinching love for him and offering him protection from the rebellion if he was to accept her as his wife (ibid. 38-39). Describing the scene, Nisbet writes: the "calmness and voice of this veiled figure made the sergeant's *manly* heart beat timorously" and "it took him all the courage to" decline her proposal. Like John Lang, the young Australian lawyer, and Shakespear, the British agent from Maclean's novel, who find themselves "in a fix" in presence of the Rani, Jackson too finds it difficult to "keep away" from her. Her beauty, voluptuous body, and promises of material wealth attract him. Yet something tells Jackson to stay away – for "there was […] something more than the gold and ivory-hilted dagger displayed in her shawl which seemed to warn him to be wary […]" (ibid. 36).

Following the outbreak of the Mutiny Jackson is drugged and kidnapped by the Rani. He is confined in an underground dungeon with all epicurean and sensual pleasures on offer. On regaining consciousness, Jackson finds himself irresistibly drawn to all these temptations and decides to stay and "enjoy his term of captivity in every way possible; in fact, as he puts it mildly, he plans to 'do a proper bust while about it'" (ibid. 177). Jackson's confinement in this "sensual love-nest," enjoying "unwonted luxury and indulgence" and a woman ready to "debase herself cheerfully to be the slave of all his caprices" and sexual fantasies, performs two interesting reversals. The first, as noted by Nancy Paxton, involves the reversal of the gendered trope of rape found in mutiny fictions by imagining "male heterosexual rape" (Paxton 157). Second, the novel reverses the usual outside-inside fantasy of the colonial harem by placing the

male colonizer within the confines of the Other's sexual space. In doing so, the novel fulfils the colonial fantasy of enjoying the harem, but the satisfaction of this fantasy also carries with it the haunting threat of captivity and the withering of British masculinity. The zenana in the novel reinstates the threatening 'thingness' of the harem by showing Jackson growing weak and effete in confinement. As Nisbet observes, "the first two or three days all went well and gaily, and he felt that life would be too brief a space for the liberal programme of delights spread out before him." But after "about a week, however, the unwonted luxury and indulgence began to *tell upon both his constitutions and spirits*." The wines gradually lost their "first flavor" and Jackson realized that "*to be cooped up like a tame canary when outside the boys were distinguishing themselves, to be everlastingly pawed over, and have to pretend he liked it better than liberty and action*" was getting "infernal in its monotony" [my emphasis] (*Desire* 206-209). Moral strength finally helps Jackson to overcome individual desire and establishes him as a true soldier of the empire.

The Rani in spite of her dynamic role in the novel is both an object and subject. She is the object of Jackson's desire and a masterful subject who willingly objectifies herself in order to seduce Jackson. This willed objectification and her attempts to entrap Jackson in her desire – her space and her time – parallel representations of the Mutiny in imperial accounts as disruptive of British, and more generally, historical space and time. For the Rani's entrapment of Jackson is not simply a question of inverting power and sexual relations, but also her inserting into the chain of historical time a piece of individualized, Asiatic time. In other words, Jackson's isolation from the time and moment of acute historical necessity (the Uprising) is represented to caution the readers from falling prey to obsolete feudal values of Asiatic despots. Jackson is caught in a temporal flux; he is confined in the zenana or the time and space of Asiatic peoples

that cannot be aligned with the progressive moment of the European present. Time as it stands still in the zenana (Jackson complains of monotony) is responsible for the cultural, moral, political, and social decay of the hero. By contrast, history is dynamic and progressive in the outside – it is a history that is being shaped by virile British men and sacrificing British women. The novel stresses the need for Jackson to relinquish his individual desires and respond to the call of History, to situate himself through masculine ideals of labor and national duty against the decadence of the Indian past. It calls to all imperial men to become subjects of History and Historical necessity rather than luxuriate in obsolete modalities of life without any concern for the collective. This call characterizes the ideological situation of the novel in relation to the Uprising as well as sexual anxieties of *fin-de-siècle* England. In the process of this historical man making, petty desires are to be sacrificed for the collective and the country, and Jackson does precisely that when he escapes from his pleasure-prison to join the counter-insurgency columns. No less significantly, itinerant sexual energies of British women are also transformed in the course of the novel and through the leaguer of the Mutiny – they become devoted and committed mothers, daughters, wives, and lovers.

The ultimate disciplining of the passionate Rani, who was responsible for pulling Jackson into the nadir of Asiatic dissoluteness, is achieved when Jackson kills her in open combat at the end of the novel. And as she dies, unrecognizable in martial battle accoutrements and her "head covered with a golden helmet," she professes her undying love for her killer. Revealing her identity as the "Ranee of Jhansi" she claims herself as his wife and him as her "lord and master" (*Desire* 305-306). As Indrani Sen affirms, the Rani who was all along represented as split between being a "sensual 'native' mistress" and a devoted passionate lover, by the end of the novel transforms into the devoted wife – passive and happily accepting her husband as the "sure

messenger of King Death" (*Desire* 306), thus reconsolidating colonial stereotypes of Indian woman (Sen 268). At the same time, the Rani's unwavering devotion to her 'husband' also instructs English women to embrace the historic New Man, refurbished through ideals of the empire and Christianity. The New Man is Jackson – a man who does not hesitate to rescue a woman in danger even if that requires opposing his own countrymen. He has the moral strength and courage to distance personal desires for serving his country in times of need; and, in spite of his martiality, has a kind and tender heart that at the sight of his "wife for a month" dying is "too much conscience stricken to utter a word" (*Desire* 306-307). The 'taming of the shrew,' the making of New Man, and the successful subjugation of the Mutiny all stand unanimously accomplished through this vision of feminine desire and masculine duty in Nisbet's novel.

IV

La Parole du Voile

In Maclean and Nisbet's novels, the containment of the Rani's political and sexual transgressions is achieved through her death. While in Maclean's novel she dies of a wound received from a stray bullet, Jackson the hero of Nisbet's novel kills her with a thrust "of his sword through chain armor and body" and into her breast (*Desire* 305). The manner in which she dies in the novels gains critical significance precisely because imperial histories and official records are unsure about the exact conditions of the Rani's death. The British, we learn from Kaye and Malleson, as well as recent histories, in fact, never discovered her dead body, which was secretly cremated by her loyal attendants after she received a mortal blow in the battle of Gwalior. But the descriptions of the Rani's death in these novels do not simply attempt to fill out a gap within historical knowledge. Rather, they illustrate the ultimate fantasy of disciplining itinerant sexuality and threatening feminity.

Hours before death, the Rani, Maclean writes, was standing "among a group of men […] on the central Bastion or citadel, on which the rebel flag had been planted" (*Rane* 240). Her presence under this "portentious" banner as "the Queen of Bundelkhand, as she was now in the habit of calling herself," Maclean explains, caused much "amusement" to the British officers. For the "insolence of her gait and bearing, showed how much she was impressed with the importance of the position she had assumed." As a narcissistic woman dressed "more like a man than a woman" and clearly out of place in a battle-field, she appears comic to those in the British camp (ibid.). With these words the readers are prepared for the Rani's death and resolutely made aware of her various transgressions – gender, political, and social – one final time. Yet, Maclean gives her legendary courage a final due while describing her daring forays in the field. Dressed in "male apparel" and sitting on "her horse like a man," she "again and again led her men into the thickest of the strife and escaped unharmed, until at last, disheartened and reduced to less than a third of their number, – they refused any longer to follow her" (ibid. 263).[155] Finally, abandoned by her men and "unhurt, either by bullet, lance, or sword," while risking "death in every possible way," the Rani is struck down by a "stray bullet […] in the breast" (ibid). It is this "stray bullet," belonging to no particular person but perhaps to History, which ultimately turns the fortunes of war against the queen. It gives her the mortal blow and the readers the exhilaration of witnessing her die by a "small grassy stream of water" – weak, failing, and exposed. It is at the moment of her death that all doubts regarding her sexual identity are resolved. Maclean writes,

[155] The *London Times* in reporting the death of the queen wrote something similar: "clad in male attire," "constantly in the saddle," "ubiquitous and untiring […] this determined and valiant, if cruel and *abandoned* woman," "our most indefatigable enem[y]," died in battle while her male chieftains surrendered to the British forces. See, *The Times*, Tuesday, 3 August 1858; *&* 4 August1858.

> […] there lay by the side of a small grassy stream of water emerging slowly from underneath the protruding corner of a rock, a woman, *though wearing the dress of a man; there could now be no mistaking her sex*, for the turban which had covered her head was displaced, and the long black hair (in the possession of which all women of Hindostan pride themselves so much, and the removal of which would be deemed so dire a disgrace) hung disheveled and uncared for about her neck and shoulders [my emphasis] (ibid. 261).

And, if her 'long black hair' is not proof enough of her womanliness, Maclean strips her clothing to leave no doubt about her sexual identity whatsoever,

> The upper part of her dress had been torn open and displayed her bosom, in the left side of which the fatal bullet which had given her death wound, had entered […] (ibid.).

Her death resolves the crisis inaugurated by her ambivalent sexual identity as well as her political rebellion. With her death, her 'thingness' is finally reintegrated into the symbolic and she is revealed as a woman, both physically and mentally. The bullet wound etches on her body the prowess and strength of the disembodied Male; the male as British and the male as [or in command of] History who succeeds in cowering her into submission and feminity.

Likewise, in Nisbet's novel, the Rani dies with a "shrill shriek" when Jackson thrusts his sword into her breast. Though Jackson did not recognize his "native antagonist," the dying cry made him aware of the identity of his fallen opponent (*Desire* 305). And as she lay dying, the Rani expressed her satisfaction by saying, "you can uncover me now, for I have got all my desire. Your sword has tasted my heart" (ibid. 306). These words correct the transgressions she had made earlier by adapting a male role in seducing and imprisoning Jackson. Also, by identifying Jackson as the one who can unveil and gratify her desires, as her "deliverer," she submits to the colonizer's fantasy of rescuing the Other woman from the veiled isolation of the

zenana (ibid.). Her feminity is expressed through her complete submission to Jackson as she declares him as her "lord and master" (ibid.).

One can extrapolate from these fictional accounts of the Rani's death a hypothetical theory for detailing the isomorphic relationship between insurrection and gender transgression as well as for explaining why conflict situations always witness an unprecedented amount of sex crimes. Insurrections like gender transgressions threaten to set free the fantasy of the Other's jouissance, that is, the Other as possessing excess jouissance and/or the Other as having stolen it from me.[156] This leads to a violent reactionary attempt at containing jouissance and reclaiming the symbolic order by preserving jouissance through rape and violence. Insurrections and sexual deviancies threaten the hetero-normative fantasy of the self as enjoying the exclusive possession of the phallus. The crumbling of this fantasy leads to a desperate neurotic attempt at (re)asserting possession. The signifier of difference is, consequently, forcibly penetrated into the Other's locus of enjoyment to humiliate the Other into submission. The death of the Rani by a stray bullet and sword, demonstrates this desire for affirming male prowess most emphatically. The assertion of British male power in the novels is aimed at containing and disciplining the Other's political and sexual transgressions by exhibiting the Other as ultimately weak and helpless. The Rani's political insurrection, translated in these novels as primarily a sexual transgression, is overwritten by a forceful and essential vision of hetero-normative history. Parallely, the Mutiny, the insurrection as a political concern, is overwritten by discourses constituting colonialism as historically destined.

[156] I do not want to introduce the point about 'theft of jouissance' in any great detail here apart from merely mentioning it. For a discussion of this see, Miller 'Extimité.' Also, Dolar, 'Hegel.'

CHAPTER IV

Retrieving Lost Selves: Mutiny, Nationalism, & Anxiety in Bengali Literature and Consciousness.

"We are not slow to scold Bengalees when required, but if in India there is a race to whom God has given capacity, real clearness of brain, it is the Bengalee. Take the most timid quaking wretch of a Kayust you can find, put him in any district in India with a shadow of authority, and if he does not make Punjabee and Sikh, Marhatta and Hindostanee, work themselves to death for his benefit, and think all the while it is for their own, he is no true Bengalee."

[*Friend of India*].[157]

"As subjects of the Crown of Great Britain, the natives of this country entertain the deepest sentiments of loyalty and fidelity to Her Majesty, and sincerely desire the permanence of the British supremacy in India, which has ensured to them freedom from foreign incursions and internecine dissensions, and security from spoliation by lawless power."

[Raja Digambar Mitra, President of the British India Association].[158]

"Readers! One fine day I was whiling away my time when I heard the sepoys in the West have gotten a bee in their bonnets. They have gathered around that Nana Saheb to wrest away from the English their kingdom, and that bearded Muslim [*lere*] chief of Delhi dreams of being the sovereign of Delhi or the World – what a pain. […] Bengalis in anticipation of trouble assembled at Gopal Mullick's house to impress upon the Sahibs that 'though a hundred years have passed, they are still that same old decrepit Bengali – years of confraternizing with the British, British education and culture has not succeeded in making Americans out of them'."

[Kaliprasanna Sinha, হুতোম প্যাঁচার নকশা (*Hutom Pyachar Naksha*) 95-96].[159]

[157] Qtd. in A Hindu 125-126.
[158] Raja Digambar Mitra (1817-1879) "Memorial to the British Parliament in 1853, pleading for the permanence of the British Supremacy in India." Cited in Majumdar 308.
[159] All translations from Bengali to English are mine unless otherwise noted.

I

To Begin

General tenor of critical scholarships on the reactions and responses of the nineteenth-century Bengali indigenous elite or the Bengali "bourgeois nationalists" to the 1857 Uprising affirm that the middle-class were either apathetic and/or largely indifferent toward the events, the rebels, and their ideologies. As one critic put it as late as 1949, the Bengali intelligentsia formed the "fifth army" for British administration (qtd. in Kabiraj 49). Confirming imperialist notions about the servile effeminacy of the Bengali race and their unflinching loyalty to the administration, these accounts suggest that the bourgeois nationalists were, first, too cowardly to assume the mantle of leadership of the revolution, and, second, too constricted in their fledgling class interests to offer any substantive support to the rebellion.[160] The absence of any major nineteenth-century Bengali literary works on the Mutiny is often cited as a telltale sign of bourgeois detachment. In this chapter, I challenge such uniform contentions in light of new archival evidence. I contend that bourgeois reactions and responses to the Mutiny were variously voiced and registered in literary texts, the 'native' press, and periodicals of the day. And these responses and reactions are more complex than existing studies recognize.

[160] The debate on the role of the bourgeois, which I term here as the 'bourgeois question,' is as old as the Mutiny. However, during the centenary year celebrations, discussions on this issue reached a feverish pitch with debates between nationalist historians like S.N. Sen and the more 'radical,' left-leaning intellectuals like Promode Sengupta, P.C. Joshi reaching great heights. For a discussion of this debate the best book remains, Sukumar Mitra's ১৮৫৭ ও বাংলাদেশ [*1857 O Bangladesh*/1857 and Bengal] (1960). For a general idea about what were written during the period in vernacular journals by Sushobhan Sarkar, Narahari Kabiraj, Benoy Ghose, Mahasweta Bhattacharya (Devi), Gopal Haldar, see Sen, *The Historiography of the Indian Revolt of 1857*. I prefer Mitra over Sen because the latter misreads the contributions of the new group siding instead with nationalist historians completely failing to see how the nationalists of S.N. Sen's ilk reproduce imperial bias and convictions. Sen's argument that the new group produced less mature writings and their works are no better than "popular journalistic interpretation[s] or an amateur's parade of rich but unorganised knowledge" is simply ridiculous. Sushobhan Sarkar, P.C. Joshi, Mahasweta Bhattacharya (Devi), Narahari Kabiraj and others were leading intellectuals of their day, political activists, and trained scholars. Sen's book however remains an interesting beginner's guide into the centenary debate for English readers, though her translations of Bengali passages are less than reliable. I have attempted a more thorough discussion of the 1957 debates in my unpublished 'The "Bourgeois Question": Centenary Debates over the Role of Nineteenth-century Bourgeois during the Great Revolt of 1857.'

1857, 1957, 2007 and the Bourgeois Question

The last serious attempt to interrogate nineteenth-century Bengali bourgeois nationalist responses to the Mutiny was done almost fifty years back during the centenary year celebrations of the event in India. Since, and especially in the last twenty years, extensive research has been done on the growth and evolution of Indian nationalism. These have investigated the imageries constituting and anxieties enmeshing nationalist discourse, paying close attention to the contouring of gender, society, and spatial organization of the nationalist space through an unholy collaboration between the colonizer and English educated native bourgeois. Yet hardly any study has come out examining specifically how the events of 1857 impacted the indigenous elite and their conceptualization of the nation.[161] The socio-political transformation of the Indian nation space and national consciousness in the last fifty years have led to the thorough supplanting of the 'bourgeois question;' favoring instead discussions of diverse and distinct histories all broadly related to indigenous resistances against British rule and read as anti-colonial in essence. Correspondingly, the problem of resolving the Uprising, as either a mutiny of sepoys and disenchanted princes or as a mass civil movement against British colonial rule, in concordant or fractured alignment with the history of Indian nationalism has been reconfigured through critiques of nationalism and the privileging of history as bound to structures of state and nationhood. The latter have compellingly showed the repression of centrifugal forces – the

[161] Notable works on Indian nationalism include: Asok Sen's *Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar and His Elusive Milestones* (1977), Partha Chatterjee's *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (1986) and *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1993), Ashis Nandy's *The Intimate Enemy* (1989), Sibaji Bandopadhyay's গোপাল-রাখাল দ্বন্দসমাস্ [*Gopal-Rakhal Dwandasamas* (1991)], Sudipto Kaviraj's *The Unhappy Consciousness* (1995), Mrinalini Sinha's *Colonial Masculinity* (1995), Indira Chaudhuri's *Frail Hero and Virile History* (1998), Sumit Sarkar's *Writing Social History* (1999) and *Beyond Nationalist Frames* (2002), and essays published in Kumkum Sanghari and Sudesh Vaid edited *Recasting Women* (1990). Recent work on the subject includes Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (2007) and Amir Mufti's *Enlightenment in the Colony* (2007). This is not a comprehensive list, especially because I do not mention vernacular writings on the subject except for Bandhopadhyay's path breaking work on children's literature and education in late nineteenth century colonial Bengal. Mention must also be made of Chatterjee [ed.] *Texts of Power*, Sikata Banerjee's *Make Me a Man*, Manu Goswami *Producing India*, of Sumantra Banerjee, Lata Mani, Gayatri Spivak, Rosnika Chaudhuri, and works in various vernacular languages as well as English being done presently at the research Universities and Centers spread all across India.

women, working-class, the peasant, the Muslim, Dalits – within nationalist discourses, and established this tendency as the characterizing feature of Indian nationalism of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Bengal.[162] As a corollary methodological approach, the subaltern studies collective have, in the last two decades, emphasized the importance of decentralized anti-colonial histories as correctives to and deconstructive of the established belief in nationalism as the only discourse challenging colonial hegemony. The subaltern historians have found the Uprising suitable to and supportive of their writing of non-bourgeois cultural consciousness; an endeavor to write an alternative history of colonialism and anti-colonial resistance 'from down below.' But, these studies, too, have either revolved around questions of subaltern consciousness in relation to modalities of dominant consciousness or sought connections to link subaltern histories to state (imperial or national) histories for critiquing and revisioning traditional historiographies. Either way, overbearingly, the discourses of nationalism have been identified as complicit with colonial hegemony and as predicated upon a complex process of domestication of alien colonial discourse into a nationalist thesis, thereby solidifying the dominant belief in bourgeois indifference.[163] As a result, substantive interrogations of the complexities of bourgeois response to the Uprising have failed to appear during the

[162] See Chatterjee *Nation and Its Fragments*; Chaudhuri, *Frail Hero*. Scholars of Indian nationalism have either overlooked or undermined the significance of the Uprising, settling instead for a critique of the domestication of colonial discourse into nationalist discourse. Partha Chatterjee and Sumit Sarkar, for instance, though noting, from time to time, the historical importance of the Uprising in the growth and evolution of nationalist discourse in India, have kept away from developing any sustained reading of its affective influence on bourgeois nationalism and literature. A critique of the critique of nationalism is yet to be undertaken, though Sumit Sarkar in his *Beyond Nationalist Frames* has boldly announced the necessity of this project.

[163] Narahari Kabiraj calls the history of Indian nationalism "a tragedy" – a history of 'freedom' movement fraught by a gap between successive mass uprisings and the inability of the bourgeois to provide leadership; between the bourgeois vision of a reformist and constitutional movement and the common desire to throw off the foreign yoke through armed decentralized engagements (Kabiraj 55-56). It is impossible to give an exhaustive list of all the peasant movements which took place during the early and mid nineteenth century. But beginning with 1770's a substantive list ought to document at least twenty rebellions: Chuar 1770 & 1779; Khasi 1783; Ganjam 1798; Nayyar 1804; Farazi 1804-1838; Velore sepoy rebellion 1806; Velu Thampi 1808; Jat 1809; Saharanpur Gujjars 1813; Bhil 1818; Bundelkhand 1824; Kittar 1828; Kol 1831-32; Manbhum Bhumij 1832; Vijaynagar 1794-1834; Naga 1831; Kolhapur 1844; Orissa Khond 1846; Santhal 1855; Munda 1857. Pramod Sengupta in his *Bharoter Mahavidroho* writes that as many as 70-odd peasant movements can be documented within the same period.

sesquicentennial year or in the recent past. Instead, and rather dangerously if I may profess, the unresolved paradox has been overwritten through a burial of the 'bourgeois question' altogether within the academy as the image of the Mutiny as a mass movement has been pushed forward into public consciousness through media, popular discourses, and even the educational system.[164] In absence of a dynamic academic engagement with the issue, the Mutiny itself has been distilled off its complexities and pressed into populist services.[165] This chapter attempts to plug this gap.

My interest in exploring representations of the Mutiny in bourgeois fictional narratives vis-à-vis nationalist discourse is not limited to challenging ideas about bourgeois indifference, but also to establish the singular importance of the Mutiny in bourgeois nationalist consciousness. For the elision of the bourgeois question is not unlike the outright categorization of the bourgeois as loyalists. Both overlook the problematic situation of the bourgeois as a class within colonial Bengal and their complex reactions to the Mutiny and, more generally, the Raj. I return therefore, first, to the Indian archives in order to excavate bourgeois articulations (traces, bits, pieces, and wholes) about the Uprising to argue that bourgeois consciousness was anything but simply indifferent. Second, I evaluate these examples to investigate the relationship between the Uprising, its representation in bourgeois narratives, and the pedagogic agency of these narratives in constructions and deconstructions of the bourgeois nationalist visions.

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[164] I still remember how with great alacrity in school I wrote lengthy explanations on why the Uprising failed – the superstition of the rebels, their desire to push India back into medievalism, the incapacity of the leaders to fight the modern armies of the British – and justified why the intellectual elite, progressive and modern, my own 'ideological and class' ancestors, stayed away from mixing with the uneducated rebels. Of course, I drew my points from history books issued by the Indian and state governments.

[165] See for instance the discourses and counter-discourses around the new film *The Rising* (2007) and its representation of Mangal Pandey as a nationalist hero. For the ideological representation of the character of Mangal Pandey, see Rudrangshu Mukherjee, *Accidental Hero*. For a discussion of the film, see Majumdar and Chakravarty '*Mangal Pandey*.' For a discussion on 1857 in Indian Cinema see, Gooptu 'Spectacle.' For a discussion of the Mutiny in recent cinema, animation, and new media see, Basu Thakur, 'Indian Mutiny in New Media: Age of Empires, Asian Dynasty, and the Mutiny as Entertainment,' unpublished.

Indeed, the dearth of material evidences, that is, the absence of a large body of writings on the Mutiny in Bengali, corroborates most emphatically the idea of the Bengali as a "silent spectator." The handful of references that exist cannot be compared to the large number of mutiny fictions written and published in England between 1857 and 1900. And to complicate matters more, Bengali nationalist responses are split – references between 1857 and 1870 are often indirect, veiled, or allusive, while those between 1870 and 1900, though direct, are few in number. The numerical rarity and allusive discussions encourage the notion that a deeply entrenched "bourgeois system" restrained the middle-class from adequately sympathizing with the rebellion. Alternatively, we can accept the theory that the Bengali middle-class was too scared to violate British censorship laws and endure punitive measures in effect. Over and above, there are innumerous evidences of support being professed and extended to the British administration during the `emeute to lend credence to the view about bourgeois loyalty.[166] In face of such overbearing confirmations of bourgeois loyalty, attempts to investigate the dynamics of Bengali cultural responses peter out, unless a revaluation of silences, loyalty oaths, indirect references, and the creation of the nationalist imaginary are taken up for analysis through new historical facts, and, most importantly, alongside at least half dozen literary texts, all of which can be unhesitatingly called 'Bengali mutiny fiction.'[167] I leave the necessary, but till date unwritten *detailed* critical discussion of the Mutiny and its representations in late nineteenth-century Bengali national consciousness for a later occasion. For the present I am content with

[166] See, A Hindu. See also Appendix in Sen *Historiography*.

[167] For a recent overview of representations of 1857 in Bengali literature of nineteenth and twentieth century, see, Ghosal, 'Sahitye Mahabidroho' [The Great Rebellion in Literature]. For a book-length study on the representation of 1857 in Indian vernacular literatures, see, Shankar Prasad Chakraborty, বঙ্গসাহিত্যে মহাবিদ্রোহ [*Banga Sahitye Mahabidroho*/The Great Rebellion in Bengali Literature] and মহাবিদ্রোহের গল্প সংকলন [*Mahabidroher Galpa Sankolon*; An Anthology of short stories on 1857]; Bhagwan Das Mahor, *1857 ke Swadhinata Sangram ka Hindi Sahitye Par Pravab* [The Impact of 1857 on Hindi Literature]. Though mostly devoted to Hindi literature see specifically chapter 7 for Marathi, Gujrati, and Bengali literatures, and pp. 414 -432 for representations in folksongs and folktales. Also see, Scholberg 26-30 for a list of Bengali fictional writing on the Uprising from 19th and 20th century. For folk songs see Mahasweta Bhattacharya (Devi) in *Parichay* (1957); and Joshi *Folk Songs*.

broaching the issue and offering a few interesting ideas only. I am hopeful that this and the following chapter will eventually germinate into a full-length study of the problematic which can only be termed: the 'bourgeois question.' (A question that can be formulated as: What does or did the bourgeois nationalists want?).

Before moving ahead, a few words must be said about the category of the native bourgeois given the unique situation and character of this class during the colonial period. First, and this has been noted by many scholars before, the nineteenth-century Bengali bourgeois did not enjoy the autonomy of power that is often associated with the European bourgeois of mid- and late- nineteenth century. On the contrary, the Indian bourgeois was circumscribed by distinct sets of social, cultural, political, and ideological parameters as a result of their position within colonialism.[168] Second, and more importantly, the Indian bourgeois was not a unified group. For that matter, the bourgeois as a historical, economical, and political body with a unified ideological mindset was non-existent in India during the mid- and late- nineteenth century. What existed as the bourgeois was an assortment of people settled in the urban centers: the rentier class, the western educated class, the higher caste elites, the government servants, moneylenders, and trading middlemen. All of them had grown under British sovereignty, in British service, and under British protection, but they did not share common economic and class interests. In all fairness to this 'group,' it must be noted that they did not control the socio-economic modes of production and their participation in the government was limited by the colonial situation. They, at best, exercised dominance over the masses without any actual possibility of establishing

[168] This point has been also made by Sengupta, ভারতীয় মহাবিদ্রোহ [*Bharatiya Mahavidroho/The Great Indian Revolution*]; Haldar, আজি হতে শতবষ পুবে['Aji Hote Sataborsho Purbe'/'A Hundred Years Ago'] 201-211; 204-211; and Kabiraj 54-56. See also Mitra 7-9. For other essays written by the 'radical' group criticizing nationalist historians see, *Parichay*. Essays on the Uprising were also published in *Itihas*, *Desh*, and *Chatuskon*. For a collection of English essays published by members more or less closely affiliated to the group who wrote in the Bengali periodicals, see Joshi [ed.], *Rebellion 1857*.

hegemony. At the same time, tendencies towards developing a unified ideological position were present within the 'group.' Nationalist thought often served as a pedagogical site for presenting ideas necessary for embourgeoisement – discipline, morals, possessive individualism etc. The Mutiny, I will show in context of this variegated bourgeois consciousness, was one such site for creating a bourgeois identity.

1857 Uprising as History and the Nineteenth-century Bourgeois Nationalists

The Uprising assumed a most problematic status in context of nineteenth-century bourgeois desire for and preoccupation with 'writing' Indian history.[169] The bourgeois desire to reformulate a history of the subcontinent with a Calvinist penchant to present themselves as its progressive vector found in the Mutiny an unnerving condition of displacement – they were absent from it! Consequently, the Mutiny functioned in nationalist discourse as a site for the fantastic insertion of bourgeois agency and ideology in the time and space of the Mutiny.[170] The national bourgeois did not repress or sidestep the Uprising in their writings; rather they incorporated and absorbed the event within and for purposes of creating the nationalist vision. Briefly put: Bengali mutiny fictions reproduce and reaffirm the central tenets of late nineteenth century Indian nationalist thought. They call for the constitution of Hindu masculine subjectivity,

[169] Bankim Chandra Chatterjee famously wrote, "If the Europeans go out bird hunting, a history of it is written. But Bengal does not have a history. Greenland has its written history, even the Maoris have some sort of history, but the land that has witnessed civilizations like Gaur, cities like Tamralipta and Saptagram […] that country has no history […] Bengal needs its history, else the Bengali can never achieve greatness." I use here two essays by Bankim, বাঙ্গালার ইতিহাস [Bangalar Itihas/History of Bengal] and বাঙ্গালার ইতিহাস সম্বন্ধে কয়েকটি কথা [Bangalar Itihas Sombondhe Koyekti Kotha/A Few Words Relative to the History of Bengal]. See, *BR*, vol 2. 330-333; 336-340. See, also, Bankim's 'Bangalar Itihaser Bhagnangsho (A Fraction of the History of Bengal),' 'Bharatvarsher Swadhinata Ebong Paradhinata (India's Independence and Dependence),' and 'Bangalir Utpatti (The Evolution of the Bengali)' in *BR*, Vol. 2. For a discussion on Bankim's 'writing' of Indian history, following his famous regret that "Indians do not have a history," see Chatterjee *Nations*. For a study on another 19th century figure, Shiva Prasad, and his 'writing' of Indian history, see Goswami *Producing India*, espc. chapter 6.

[170] I have argued elsewhere that the problem faced by post-colonial historians in 1957 regarding the possible synchronization of the Uprising with bourgeois nationalist history is similar to problems faced by late nineteenth-century writers while devising a vision of Indian history and national past. Unfortunately, it is not possible to take a detour into this highly interesting and charged problematic that emerged at the centenary year. See, Basu Thakur, 'The Bourgeois Question,' [unpublished].

emphasize the segregation of private and public domains, encourage the capacity to develop a consciousness that can simultaneously straddle tradition and western modernity, and urge historical, ideological, cultural and social separation between, first, Hindus and Muslims and, then, the Hindu western educated bourgeois and the rest of the masses.[171] Far from having no effect on the bourgeois, the events of 1857 were directly responsible for giving the bourgeois political consciousness shape, agency, direction, and a structure to build the specifics of an imaginary nationhood. It was an imaginary of the 'nation' and national subjectivity founded on the cusp of 'Western' and 'Eastern' knowledge systems and an 'invented tradition' of *Hindu-Aryan* past.[172]

In what follows, I resuscitate this distinct program of bourgeois resolution of the question of Indian Uprising by asserting that although the bourgeois involvement in the rebellion was ambivalent and split, their engagement with the event in the post-mutiny nationalist period (1870 onwards) is profoundly ideological. In the course of my discussion, I will consider how Bengali mutiny fictions affected or revised the nationalist imaginary in continuation with the fundamental claims of nationalist ideology studied by Partha Chatterjee et al; i.e. in relation to subjectivity,

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[171] Rajat Kanta Ray observes a 'triangular' interaction between the European, Indian aristocratic and gentry class, and the western educated middle-class as characteristically defining political and social interactions in the post-1870s period. The uneducated masses are completely missing from this field of engagement, though their desires and demands are always taken for granted in the elite political arguments. However, the creation of a stable gentry-class was acutely problematic given the collapse of the *rentier* class 1870s onwards. The *nouveau bourgeois* were also seriously handicapped by their inability to claim aristocratic lineage and the reality of being professionals or *chakurijibi*, employed as clerks in various government establishments. Increasingly, in the post-1870s, due to the "realignment of the colonial political economy […] and the modification and intensification of class hierarchies," Mrinalini Sinha reminds us, "[t]he Bengali elites found themselves squeezed out of the dynamic economic sector" as management passed strictly into European hands and local businesses to the Marwari immigrants. Sinha reads the question of colonial masculinity into this material condition and argues that masculinity as imagined during the period points directly at "multiple axes along which power [too] was exercised in colonial India" (1; 5-6). For a discussion on elite politics during the post-1870's period, see Ray *Social Conflict*; and for bourgeois ennui regarding *chakri*, see Sarkar *Writing Social History* 186-215; 282-357.

[172] Shibnath Shastri, for example, notes in his socio-biography of the fire brand 'Young Bengal' member Ramtanu Lahiri: "the period between 1857 and 1861 can be called the most auspicious moment for Bengal" (*Ramtanu Lahiri* 202); while, Ajit Kumar Chakravarty in his biography of Debendranath Tagore writes, the mutiny "left a propitious state of affairs in its wake. The beginning of political struggle can be traced back to it. The dead flames of the mutiny fuelled the subsequent political struggles"(qtd. in Mitra 11).

gender, and socio-spatial arrangement. Following my archival restitution of bourgeois consciousness of the Uprising, I will demonstrate these points through a discussion of three mutiny novels – Upendra Mitra's *Nana Saheb or India's Dream* (1879) and Girish Ghosh's *Chandra* (1884), both written in Bengali, and Soshee Dutt's English novel *Shunkur: A Tale of the Indian Mutiny* (1877), alongside the seminal nationalist work of the period, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Anandamath* (1882).[173]

II

Bengali 'Mutiny Fiction'

The first Bengali mutiny fictions were published about seventeen years after 1857, corresponding with the first wave of nationalism in Bengal and the rise of masculine Christianity in England.[174] চিত্তবিনোদিনী [*Chittabinodini*] (1874) by Gobindacharan Ghosh is most likely the earliest work. Others followed in quick succession: Atul Krishna Mitra's play নিরবাপিত দীপ [*Nirbapita Deep*] in 1877, Soshee Dutt's English novel *Shunkur: A Tale of the Indian Mutiny of 1857* in 1877, Upendra Mitra's *Nana Saheb or India's Dream* in 1879, চন্দ্রা [*Chandra*] by Girish Ghosh in 1884, ঝাঁসীর রাণী [*Jhansir Rani*] by Chandicharan Sen in 1888, শংকর [*Shankar*] (adapted from Soshee Dutt's English novel) by Saradaprasad Mukherjee also in 1888, Nagendranath Gupta's অমর সিংহ [*Amar Singha*] in 1889, Prasannamoyee Devi's অশোক [*Asoka*] in 1890, and Jyotrindranath Tagore's novel ঝাঁসীর রাণী [*Jhansir Rani*] in 1901. A number of short stories were written between 1890 and 1910. These include Rabindranath Tagore's দুরাশা ['Durasha'] (1893),

[173] My discussion of Bankim's novel will be minimal. I want to keep my focus on only those novels that deal directly with the Mutiny as its theme and Bankim's novel is set in the 1770's. But of course, the relation between Bankim's novel and its descriptions of an organized *Sanyasi* Rebellion against British (from second edition it is the Muslims who are presented as enemies) rule and the 1857 Uprising is more than evident to the discerning eye. I want to retain my focus on Bengali mutiny fictions because, one, almost nothing has been written about these novels and, two, much has already been written about Bankim's *Anandamath* that my readers will easily be able to find the echoes between these texts and Bankim's novel.

[174] For a discussion of the emergence of Christian masculinity in England, its relation to Empire, and its effect on the colony and nationalist thought, see, Banerjee *Make me a Man*, and Chowdhury *Frail Hero*.

Nagendranath Gupta's ভৈরবী ['Bhairavi'] (1889), Sudhindranath Tagore's পরিনাম ['Parinaam'] (1910), and perhaps the only mutiny story written by a woman, Swarna Kumari Debi's মিউটিনী ['Mutiny'] (1910).[175] In between, the most detailed history of the Uprising in Bengali, সিপাহী বিদ্রোহের ইতিহাস [*Sipahi Bidroher Itihas*/'History of the Sepoy Rebellion'], was written by Rajanikanta Gupta. Six volumes of this history were published between 1870 and 1910. Gupta also penned a collection of biographies of famous men and women of India in 1885 – বীরমহিমা [*Birmahima*/'Paeans of Valor'] – in which rebel leaders like Kunwar Singh and Laxmie Bai are featured in glorious terms. Durgadas Bandopadhyay started writing his memoir, বিদ্রোহে বাঙ্গালী বা আমার জীবনচরিত (*1857 Uprisings: A Tale of an Indian Warrior*), recounting his experiences during the 'mutiny,' around 1890's though it was published only in 1924. Mention must be made here also of Tagore's 1910 novel গোরা [*Gora*], Bhuvanchandra Mukhopadhyay's history সিপাহী বিদ্রোহ ও মিউটিনী [*Sipahi Bidroho O Mutiny*/'Sepoy Rebellion and Mutiny'], published in 1907/09, and Panchkari Banerjee's history সিপাহী বিদ্রোহের ইতিহাস [*Sipahi Bidroher Itihas*/'History of Sepoy Rebelion'], published in 1919. Apart from these, critics have identified direct and indirect references and allusions to the Uprising in a number of texts beginning as early 1858. Also, in biographical writings (আত্ম-চরিত/*atmā chārita*), social commentaries, Indian English and vernacular newspapers as well as periodicals references to the event are found aplenty. But in stark contrast to the works coming out after 1870s (except for Gobindacharan Ghosh's *Chittabonodini*), the opinions voiced between 1857 and 1870 (especially in literature) are

[175] A number of short stories were written by Pramathanath Bishi and Gajenmdra Kumar Mitra during the twentieth century. Shankar Prasad Chakraborty edited মহাবিদ্রোহের গল্প সংকলন [An Anthology of Short Stories on the Indian Mutiny] contains twenty-five stories including those mentioned above. Chakraborty mentions Swarna Kumari Debi's short story as 'Mutiny,' but Abhijit Sen and Anindita Bhadhuri edited collection of Swarna Kumar Debi's writings give the title of the story as ছোটখাটো মিউটিনী or 'Another Mutiny.' See, *Swarna Kumari Debi Rochona Sankalan* [Collection of Swarna Kumari Debi's Writings] 100-105. Swarna Kumari wrote a historical novel titled বিদ্রোহ [Revolution] that too can be identified as allegorically representing the Mutiny though set in a different time. See, *Swarna Kumari Debi Rochanaboli* [The Collected Works of Swarna Kumari Debi] 29-184.

somewhat unfavorably disposed towards the mutiny and the mutineers. I will first discuss some of these early responses before moving onto the mutiny novels of the 70s and 80s in order to show the trajectory of bourgeois nationalist consciousness in its process of evolution qua the 'mutiny.'

The *Bhadralok* and Fifty-seven

The most admired and dominant figure in the Calcutta intellectual circle at the time of the Mutiny was Iswarchandra Gupta (1812-1859). Widely acclaimed as the 'father of modern Bengali poetry,' Gupta owned and published the সংবাদ প্রভাকর [*Sambad Prabhakar*], a periodical that later became a daily newspaper. The *Prabhakar* exerted great hold on the bourgeois mind, mirroring and swaying public opinion through its editorials, many of which were penned by Gupta himself (Dasgupta 'History in Bengali Literature' 28-29).

In April of 1857, *Sambad Prabhakar* published a brief dispassionate report on the hanging of a rebel sepoy in Barrackpore. The report dismissed the incident as nothing special and waived away concerns about an impending sepoy revolt as false. The outbreak at Meerut on May 10 however changed both *Prabhakar's* and Gupta's stance. The latter launched a virulent campaign against the mutineers through his poems and editorials. Between May 1857 and September 1858, Gupta published on an average 2 pieces (1 poem and 1 prose commentary) on the mutiny every week. In one of his editorials published in the *Prabhakar* in April 1858 he wrotes, "[t]he Sepoy Mutiny has disgraced the name of *Bharat*. […] we are entreating the mutineers not to blemish the pure land of Bharat any further and to surrender immediately to the State. It is because of them that Bharat has lost her former glory and famine has befallen the

land. Therefore, there is no other way except to ask for pardon of the world-conquering British" (qtd. in Chaudhuri *Frail Hero* 23).[176]

Gupta's poems in particular lash out at the rebel leaders. Calling them misdirected bigots and pretentious usurpers, he "prays" for their quick death at the hands of the British forces. Both Nana Sahib and Lakshmi Bai were picked out as special subjects by Gupta for his most scathing critiques and caustic satires. Nana is variously dehumanized and consistently referred as the "adopted ass" (*pushyi ere*) and a "rogue sheep" (*doshyi bhere*). The queen of Jhansi is called a "shameless whore" (*magi*); an "unwomanly woman" overstepping the domestic bounds and making a fool of herself. In his poem "Kanpur Bijoy" (The Conquest of Kanpur), Gupta even makes stark insinuations about Nana and Lakshmi Bai's relationship (qtd. in Mitra 2-4). His other poems more generally make fun of the uneducated Purbaiya sepoys and their *lere* (bearded Muslim) compatriots, and ask the Hindus to stay away from the rebellion. In "Dillir Juddha" (The Battle of Delhi) he writes,

ভারতের প্রিয় পুত্তু হিনদু সমুদয়

মুত্তোমুখে বল সবে ব্রিটিশের জয়

[O Hindus, The most beloved of India's sons,

Hail Freely to British Victory]

(qtd. in Chakraborty *Banga Sahitye* 138).[177]

Interestingly, though Gupta was opposed to social reforms, in particular to widow remarriage and introduction of English, he still did not side with the rebels who, it was widely believed, opposed British intervention into indigenous religious traditions and customs. Instead, Gupta found the moment particularly apt for lashing out at both the western-educated social

[176] I use here Chaudhuri's translation of the original passage.
[177] Gupta also does not leave the widows of the rebels alone. In one of his poems, he sarcastically broaches the subject of these widows shedding crocodile tears at their condition and regretting the fact that there was no reformist to remarry and rescue them from their abjection. See, Mitra 4.

reformers and the rebels. Chakraborty correctly identifies Gupta's consciousness as split (দৈবতসত্তা/*dwaityaswatta*). Strongly dismissive of Hindu reformists and anglicization of Bengali culture under British tutelage, he criticizes the reformists movements in poems like 'বিধবা বিবাহ আইন' ["Widow Remarriage Act"] and 'বুড়ো শিবের সতুতি' ["Old Shiva's Hymn"], yet at the same time he openly admires the gallantry of the British troops fighting the rebels (*Banga Sahitye* 142). Therefore, to identify Gupta as representative of the entire middle-class, as Sajanikanta Das does when he argues in support of the theory of bourgeois indifference, is to fail in considering the varied and complex instances of bourgeois reaction to the rebellion (Mitra 2). Even if we consider Gupta as an ardent supporter of the British during the mutiny, then there are his contemporaries who are not. Rangalal Bandopadhyay's poem পাদ্মিনী উপাখ্যান (*Padmini Upakhyan* or *The Narrative of Padmini*), published in 1858, for instance, can be read as extending veiled support to the Uprising. Set in the Delhi Sultanate period, the poem narrates the clash between the Rajput Kingdom of Chittor and the Sultan of Delhi, Allah-ud-din-Khilji, over the latter's desire for Padmini, the queen of Chittor. The poem contains, famously, an early call to freedom from 'alien' rule that many have read as extending a veiled support to the 1857 rebellion –

সবাধীনতা হীনতায় কে বাচিতে চায়,

হে কে বাচিতে চায়?

অত এব রণভূমে চল তরা যাই হে,

চল তরা যাই

দেশ হিতে মরে যে, তুল্য তার নাই হে

তুল্য তার নাই হে ।।

["Who wants to live under foreign rule? […] so let us all gather quickly in the battlefield/ For those who die for the country/Has none comparable"] (100-102).

Rangalal's poem is particularly instructive for those exploring the nationalist imagination of a singular bourgeois identity. On the one hand, the poem is an early example of the bourgeois nationalist fascination with Rajputs and Marathas and their tales of valor against the 'alien Muslims.' It is a site for constructing a Hindu past and Hindu martiality, reflective of the bourgeois desire for History.[178] On the other, the context of Hindu-Mughal territorial contest though used as a platform to call for a revolt against alien rule does not identify the British as oppressors. The distant historical setting of the poem allegorizes and dehistoricizes all suggestions to the British rule as alien, thus evading possible British censure. These strategies in Rangalal Banerjee's poem have been often noted. What has not been adequately emphasized is how the poem also imparts a lesson in embourgeoisement of the nationalist elite. The political struggle between Chittor and Delhi is presented as a libidinal struggle – the Muslim desiring a married Hindu woman and the Hindu husband fighting to avenge the insult of *his* woman – to not only perpetuate the notion of responsible masculinity, but also to emphasize conjugal discipline and morals. The discipling of the conjugal space was a central preoccupation with Bengali writers as the first step towards consolidating a bourgeois sovereignty. I will return to a discussion of this in context of the vernacular mutiny novels shortly. For the moment let me continue with the discussion about bourgeois responses in the immediate period of the Mutiny.

There was, in truth, no absolute or unilateral extension of support towards the British during the years of the Uprising. Instances of dissent abounded even in these early days, some open while others shrouded in mystery. For example, it has been only recently discovered that members of the Bengali bourgeois elite, even those associated with programs of social reform,

[178] See for example Rajendranath Mitra's শিবাজীর চরিত্র [Sibaji's Charita/The Character of Sibaji] (1860) and মেবারের রাজেতিব্ৃত [Mebarer Rajetibritta/The Royal Lives of Mewar] (1861); Romesh Chandra Dutt's মহারাষ্ট্র জীবন প্রভাত [Maharashtra Jiban Prabhat/The Dawning of Maharashtra] (1878) and রাজপুত জীবন সন্ধ্যা (Rajput Jiban Sandhya/The Twilight of The Rajputs] (1888). For a discussion on Bengali bourgeois fascination with Rajput and Maratha historical characters like Prithwiraj Chauhan and Shivaji, see Chaudhuri *Frail Hero* 40-65.

were involved in clandestine activities during the `emeute trying to garner support for the rebels. Dakshinaranjan Mukherjee is one such character. A veil of mystery surrounds this enigmatic member of the Young Bengal movement and his activities during the Uprising. He is rumored to have kept contact with the rebels and of conspiring against the British government. As Thomas Edwardes, the biographer of Henry Derozio, writes:

> All his life Duckinaranjan Mookerjee lived in the midst of scheming and intrigues. In the incidents that led to the mutiny and throughout its progress, the former pupil of Derozio schemed all round, at one time making overtures to some members of the Tagore family regarding certain designs of the king of Oudh, at another seemingly working hard as a loyal subject in the interests of England. All his manoeuvers during the period of Sepoy Rebellion will probably never be revealed but he had sufficient craft to make it appear to [Alexander] Duff and the officials of the Foreign Office that he was a highly deserving and loyal subject (qtd. in Mitra 15-16).

If Edwardes is correct, then the British were completely hoodwinked by Mukherjee. For in imperial histories, Mukherjee is portrayed as a loyalist. He was even awarded by the administration for his loyal support of the government during the rebellion. Mukherjee was made honorary Assistant Commissioner and given the *talukdari* of a dislodged rebel landlord, Bani Madho, in Uttar Pradesh, after the Uprising. His job: to reclaim the confidence of native subjects and transform them into die-hard loyalists like him! (ibid. 14-15). Mukherjee's intrigues were, however, not outside the knowledge of the native bourgeois. Kaliprasanna Sinha in his classic *Hutom Pyanchar Nyaksha* (*The Barn Owl's Antics*) makes a snide reference to Mukherjee when he writes, "while the innocent stood punished, the guilty were awarded with *jagirs*" (98).[179]

[179] That the members of the Young Bengal were fascinated by thoughts of a Jacobin urban revolution can be gathered from Kylas Chunder Dutt's short story 'A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours of the Year 1945'. See, Tickell

The Indian English and vernacular press presents the most perfect illustration of the split bourgeois nationalist consciousness.[180] Though never rallying to the support of the sepoys, the press consistently noted the drawbacks of the Company's government during the 'red years.' Editor of the English language *Hindu Patriot*, Harishchandra Mukherjee – a loyalist and firm believer in constitutional movement towards self-rule – criticized the British administration for its brutal counter-insurgency actions. Most scandalously, in his editorial dated the 21 May 1857, he noted, "There is not a single native of India who does not feel the full weight of the grievances imposed upon him by the very existence of the British rule in India – grievances inseparable from subjection to a foreign rule" (qtd. in Chaudhuri *Civil Rebellion* 259).[181] Interestingly, at the same time, Girish Chandra Ghosh [not to be mistaken with the author of *Chandra*], in his editorials written for the same *Hindu Patriot*, strived to play down what he called a "simple strike among the army" from being magnified into a "national rebellion" (Ghosh 'The Mutiny' 111). In the June 4th issue, Ghosh openly declared the unflinching faith of the

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[ed.] *Selections from Bengaliana* 149-159. See, also Tickell's introduction 18-20. It is interesting that Haldar believes Dakshinaranjan was opposed to the Uprising. See, Haldar, ''Bengali' 259. Most recently, Amaresh Misra has identified another interesting yarn in this yet to be spun narrative of Dakshinaranjan's life. British military correspondences mention the agents of Dharma Sabha as responsible for inciting the sepoys at Barrackpur. But there were two Dharma Sabhas, one, the more famous at Calcutta, which Charles Ball believes was responsible for spreading rumors in order to provoke the sepoys at Barrackpur, and the other at Nadia. It is not very clear from British correspondences and reports which Dharma Sabha was suspect. But what is interesting about the clandestine Nadia Sabha is that it was led by a man known only as 'Mukkhuji' or Mukherjee. Though a very common family name in Bengal, one cannot help notice that Dakshinaranjan had the same last name. See, Misra I: 148-149.

[180] During the crisis, a bilingual periodical, *Samachar Sudhabarshan*, was charged by the government for publishing mutinous and seditious articles in support of the rebels. Qtd. in Mitra 6.

[181] While, this was indeed the most precipitate reason behind the uprisings, most British accounts tend to deviate into other things, like religion and feudal conspiracies. But in Alexander Duff's memoirs we get a sense of the general discontent, even among the Bengalis, with the administration during the crisis years (Duff 180). Similarly, Kaye also writes that, "There were thousands in the city [of Calcutta] who would have risen at the signal of one who [the descendant of the Nawab of Bengal], weak himself, was yet strong in the prestige of a great name" (Kaye I: 498). And, indeed, as many have argued, the failure of the national bourgeois lay in their inability to provide leadership to the masses in absence of any strong leader. For as Girish Chandra Ghosh observed at that time, "Should Calcutta be for a single day in the hands of an insurgent soldier, the moral effect upon the country already excited as it is – would be much greater than if one of the provinces on the Indus were lost" (Ghosh 'The Metropole and Its Safety' 262).

"people of Bengal" to the government, summarily rejecting all rumors about the involvement of the Bengali middle-class with the rebellion (Ghosh 'The Sepoy' 266-67).

These editorials, coming out in the same periodical within a span of two weeks, show that the indigenous bourgeois were either confused or deliberately cautious about openly supporting any one of the two parties involved in the struggle. It is not a stretch to imagine though, that perhaps, they were comparatively more inclined towards the British than the uneducated peasant sepoys.[182] For the 'new' native bourgeois were anxious about these uneducated sepoys 'turning their sophisticated and urbane worlds upside down.' Connecting and tracing bourgeois consciousness with not only economic liberalism, but also religious and cultural reformism of the mid-nineteenth century, Gopal Haldar observes that for the bourgeois who had built their constituency around ideals of political, cultural, and religious liberalism, the "adventurist, haphazard and spontaneous feudal-reactionary military rising" posed a threat to everything they had achieved. Siding with the British, therefore, was practical for all purposes. On the one hand, it was the only way to gain foothold against the conservative Hindus of the Dharma Sabha who opposed social and education reforms along European lines (Haldar 'Bengali' 260).[183] On the other, it was also necessary to not let the sepoys overrun the city or take over the rule of the country following which the native bourgeois could have only been marginalized. But again, support extended to the British is definitely not a sign of uncompromising die-hard loyalty on the part of the bourgeois. Harish Mukherjee's open declaration about popular discontent clarifies the contrary and makes any assessment of him as a staunch 'Cannighite' problematic.[184] If anything, the 'western' educated Bengali bourgeois, the tribe of 'Macaulay's minutemen,' was conscious

[182] This is most clear in Girish Ghosh's editorials and his attempt to explain away the 'people of Bengal' from any involvement with sepoy activities. See Ghosh *Selections*.
[183] For a similar view, see Benoy Ghose, 'The Bengali Intelligentsia,' 112.
[184] Benoy Ghose claims that Harish Mukherjee single-handedly built up the "myth of Clemency Canning" and his efforts were rewarded by the government. See, Ghosh 'Editorial' xii- xiii. Also Shastri 371.

of their position as colonized subjects while equally understanding the opportunity the rebellion provided them. Yet somehow, they restricted themselves to conducting superficial criticisms of the government; making veiled references to the pangs of foreign rule from time to time but never coming out to take part in the rebellion or assuming intellectual leadership of it.

It has often been argued that, the period from the establishment of Hindu College in 1817 through Bengal Renaissance and into the first wave of nationalism in the 1870's was the most exemplary period in the growth of the native bourgeois under British tutelage. If true, this lends weight to existing arguments about Bengali loyalty during the Uprising, and forces us to accept occasional editorial outbursts against the British government as exceptions rather than the norm. But there is an illogical historical determinism in the theorization of the 1870s as temporally marking the beginning of nationalist thought in India. It is true that Ram Mohan Roy, a leading figure of the Bengal Renaissance, extended unequivocal support to British colonization of India in 1829 and urged his fellow countrymen to cooperate with the colonial government.[185] But it is also true that as early as 1849, and not 1870s, the Bengali intelligentsia started to show signs of dissatisfaction. The first steps towards organizing an autonomous movement against the British government were launched around this time following the Black Act crisis and the merger of Dwarkanath Tagore's Bengal Landowners Association and George Thomson's British India Society to constitute the British India Association in 1851.[186]

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[185] Ram Mohan speaking at a meeting on 'Free Trade and Colonisation' at the Calcutta Town Hall observed in support of British rule in India, "[the] greater our intercourse with European gentlemen, the greater will be our improvement in literary, social and political affairs, a fact which can be easily proved by comparing the conditions of those of my countrymen who have enjoyed this advantage with that of those who unfortunately have not had that opportunity." See, *Royal Asiatic Journal*, vol. II, New Series, May-August 1830.

[186] The Black Act of 1849 refers to a 4 point amendment proposed by Drinkwater Bethune to reform the existing legal system under which no European could be tried except at the Supreme Court in Calcutta. Regulation VI of 1823 and Regulation V of 1830 gave European Indigo planters a clean chit to strengthen their rule in the villages. Following the 1833 Charter Act that gave free trade and zamindari rights to Europeans, the situation gradually veered towards the worse as reports of indiscriminate torture by Europeans on Indian farmers increased. In 1849 a slew of corrective measures were thought of to curb European landholders from tyrannizing the farmers. The

The second shock came in 1856 with the annexation of the princely kingdom of Oudh. Girish Ghosh spewed venom against the government's inopportune annexation of a sovereign state through his editorials in the *Hindoo Patriot*. Drawing upon the bitter memories of 1849, Ghosh remarked "The hired *lathials* of the Bengal Indigo planters and Zamindars commit scarcely less flagrant atrocities than the devoted followers of the landholders of Oude." And, reminding the administration of the old proverb about the risk of inhabiting glass houses and pelting stones, Ghosh added: "Oude, is, we aver, as well governed as either Bengal, Agra or the Punjab. Its annexation will accordingly be an act of the most flagrant injustice, though there are precedents enough to keep the violation in countenance" (qtd. in Sengupta 11). Barring these two instances (1849 and 1856), the bourgeois for most parts of the early- and mid- nineteenth century retained faith in the ultimate benefits of western colonization; and accordingly, during the Uprising, their criticism was limited to the actions taken by the administration and less towards the evils of colonization. For that reason the Queen's proclamation was enthusiastically applauded as the right step towards civilization and enlightenment, and it was not until the Indigo Revolt of 1859 that the native bourgeois came around, *en masse*, to mount a strong protest against colonial rule. I agree with Haldar and others that nineteenth-century bourgeois consciousness was split and the general reluctance of the Bengali middle-class to join the rebellion or emerge in strong vocal support of it can be traced to a compelling set of socio-cultural agencies and historical parameters (Haldar 204-211; Mitra 7-9; Kabiraj 54-56). But, I also agree with Promode Sengupta who identifies in the silences of Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar,

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greatest challenge for the government was the issue of discrimination in the legal field. Cases registered by farmers against European plantation owners could only be tried at the Supreme Court since the local courts had no right to try any European. Bethune's proposal called for the abolition of legislative exemptions enjoyed by Europeans. The Europeans opposed this and dubbed it the Black Act. Under intense protest from Europeans the Act was withdrawn much to the chagrin of the native intelligentsia whose belief in England's liberal modernity encountered a brutal shock. See, Shastri 313-314.

Michael Madhusudan Dutt, Debendranath Tagore, and Akshay Kumar Datta the extension of gestural support towards the rebellion. For Sengupta the "silences of these […] men is more suggestive than the fidelity expressed by lesser beings" like the *zamindars* and other members of the comprador class (Sen 224). But of course, the complexity of the 'bourgeois question' stems from the fact that no clear cut distinction or separation can be made even between those openly supporting the British and those silently sympathizing with the rebels.

What is to be Done? The National Bourgeois and the Colonial World

The constitutive shift in the bourgeois consciousness about British rule happened gradually over the years – beginning in 1849 it found its most vocal expression in the late 1860s on occasion of the National Fair or Hindu Mela. At the second annual convention of Hindu Mela, Gyanendranath Tagore emphasizing the need for an independent and autonomous nationalist movement called for replacing the usual politics of 'appeals and petitions' pursued by the bourgeois with proactive demands. However, it was not until the mid 1870s and 1880s that bourgeois desire for a sustained anti-colonial movement crystallized into a distinct conceptual appearance and they succeeded in seeing through the artificiality of British promises.

This change is most strikingly represented through the life and writings of Bholanath Chandra. Chandra (1822-1910) was an ardent loyalist during the Uprising and had described the rebellion by the sepoys as "suicide." The success of the rebellion, Chandra believed, would have completely destroyed all prospects of economic growth and commercial expansion for India as a nation. A strong believer in Western education, Chandra was certain of India's excellent future, for securing which he was against the immediate retraction of British rule. He advised Indians to wait until they made relative advancements in western education and before demanding the end of the British rule. Till then, he sermonized, it was India's fate and good fortune to remain under

the auspices of the most Aryan of all empires (qtd. in Mitra 109-111). However, following bankruptcy in the wake of the Indigo rebellion in 1863, Chandra turned into the most vocal critic of British imperialism. In a series of articles published in the celebrated *Mukherjee's Magazine* between March 1873 and June 1876, Chandra, on pretext of criticizing Krishna Mohan Mullik's *A Brief History of Bengal Commerce* (1872), launched a virulent *expose* of the imperialist-capitalist nexus supported by British government in India (ibid. 113-117).[187] "To strip naked the disguised truth," Chandra vocalizes, "the English want [nothing but] to reduce us all to the condition of agriculturists. It would be impolitic for them to rear up great or rich men among us. They are afraid of the consequences of intelligence and wealth in our nation. Hence the dust thrown into our eyes. England's boast as a manufacturing power would be at an end, if India followed her own trades and industries. Hence the persistent dissemination of the opinion that India's appointed vocation is agriculture."[188] The real motives of British colonialism, Chandra continues, "may be surmised as a policy wholly and purely of interest, and not duty. At first prohibitive, next aggressive, then suppressive, it has at last become regressive – setting bounds to Native ambition for anything approaching commercial rivalry. In name, it advocates free trade. In fact, it upholds a gigantic monopoly" (ibid. 116). Unfortunately, the journal closed down before the last part of Chandra's essay, indicatively titled 'Bhabishyat Jug' or 'The Future,' could be published. We thus do not have Chandra's views regarding how he planned to supplant British hegemony and replace it with native (bourgeois) rule.

[187] The three parts published in the *Mukherjee's Magazine* are: 'Upakramanika' March 1873; 'Bharatvarsher Silpa O Banijya (Atit Jug)' June – December 1873; 'Bharatvarsher Silpa O Banijya (Bartaman Jug) January-June 1875-76. The final part dealing with the future of Indian industry and commerce was never published.

[188] Rabindranath Tagore in his 1916 lecture/essay titled 'Nationalism in India,' voiced a similar sentiment when he stated: "It must be remembered that at the beginning of the British rule in India our industries were suppressed and since then we have not met with any real help or encouragement to enable us to make a stand against the monster commercial organizations of the world. The nations have decreed that we remain purely an agricultural people […] to be swallowed at any moment by any which has even the most rudimentary set of teeth [i.e.. industries] in its head." See, Tagore, *Nationalism*, 'Nationalism in India,' 149.

In literature, the move from a cultivated silence to direct, and at times celebratory, representations of the Uprising also comes to the foreground at around this time. Gopal Haldar believes that while early silences and veiled references are symptomatic of middle-class doubts and anxieties over the future of their hard earned social reforms, later writings [of the 70s and beyond] demonstrating open admirations for the Mutiny were products of Hindu Nationalism. Citing the example of Rabindranath Tagore, Haldar notes, "Hindu nationalism was a new force, and it did not consider the religious fear and fanaticism of the sepoys of 1857 harmful and distasteful" as the Hindu and Brahmo liberals of 1857-1861 had found them. Infused by this spirit, Haldar says, even the young Rabindranath Tagore wrote in "open admiration of the heroes of the sepoy war." There was, he affirms, a "gradual change in the climate of opinion" after 1864, which led to more open articulations and praises for the Uprising (Haldar 'Bengali' 268-69).

Indeed, in the novels published after 1870, the critique of the 'mutiny' as retrograde and the representation of the leaders as feudalistic despots are comparatively tempered. It must be noted, though, the anxiety over the pre-modern uneducated religious subaltern-rebels did not subside or undergo any transformation. The masses remain marginal in nationalist representations of the Uprising, their role relegated to that of voice-less and powerless participants in an event organized by patriot princes, feudal lords, and enlightened ascetic hermits. The Mutiny was rewritten as an 'Ur-nationalist' moment; plotted, led, and suffered by the relatively educated princely class of the country with aid from free-thinking Hindu monks. This interest in the Mutiny was of course a change in itself as far as middle-class psychology is concerned. Bourgeois efforts at constructing a history of the event through fiction, essays, and historical narratives reflect a nationalist desire to engage with dominant imperial historiographies

and their claims about the Mutiny.[189] But the nationalist recasting of the event is no less problematic than or no less ideological when compared to imperial accounts. The nationalist accounts suffer from their own misrepresentations, misidentifications, and misappropriations – all overarchingly illustrating nationalist anxieties over politics, gender, and modernity. Most generally, the anxieties within the nationalist imaginary regarding the Mutiny stem as much from attempts to construct and maintain stable notional identities as from apprehensions regarding the erasure of middle-class ascendancy, either by the withdrawal of British favor or another 1857 like uprising led by the subaltern-peasants of the country.[190]

The shift in bourgeois response to the Mutiny appears clear when comparing Gobindacharan Ghosh's 1874 novel *Chittabinodini* with later works, like Atul Krishna Mitra's play *Nirbapita Deep* (1877) or Upendra Mitra's *Nana Saheb* (1879). In *Chittabinodini*, Ghosh's hero Charuchandra condemns the mutineers for their rebellion against the government in the following words – "these events have come to pass because of a few narrow-minded individuals, for it was never England's intention [to defile the castes] who, but only a brute, can possibly rise up against such a government?" Ghosh's hero then goes on to ask, if his countrymen are ready for independence from British rule – "Are we ready enough for independence? Do we have the required intelligence, courage, advancement, and the gift of good thinking? […] Whatever little

[189] Ramsunder Trivedi in his preface to Rajanikanta Gupta's *Sipahi Yuddher Itihas* [History of the Sepoy War] notes that through Gupta's work "at length the misgivings of British historians would be addressed, and the stains on our national character purged." The preface was published as an essay titled 'Swargiya Rajanikanta Gupta' subsequently, Qtd. in Mitra 85.

[190] During the Mutiny, depending on specific class interests, the anxieties of the Bengali bourgeois were manifold. First, there was the anxiety about the sepoys attacking and looting Calcutta. Second, there was the anxiety over the collapse of British rule and revival of the Mughal feudal order, thereby implying the end of all privileges enjoyed by the bourgeois within the colonial capitalist society. Associated with these were anxieties over taking sides prematurely. For example, though the zamindars of Bengal and the British India Association condemned the rebellion and sepoys in a letter of support sent to Canning on 22 May 1857, a few like the Maharaja of Bardhaman waited till the fall of Delhi before sending a similar letter of support to the government at Calcutta. The most apparent anxiety had to do with the presumed bigotry of the sepoys and the threat they constituted to liberal modernity – to the bourgeois 'home' and the 'world' – that is, to the reformist progressive imaginary of the Bengali middle-class. See, Sinha 95-98, Shastri 369-371, Durgadas, espc. section titled 'Janmobhumi' [Motherland].

was there, we have now lost. And it would take a hundred years of peace before we can hope to regain all that." If Ghosh's hero sounds like 'early' Bholanath Chandra, then writings of later period echo the 'later' Bholanath. Both Atul Krishna Mitra's 1877 play *Nirbapita Deep* and Upendra Mitra's 1879 novel *Nana Saheb* portray the 'mutiny' as a nationalist struggle against colonial rule. In his preface to the second edition of the book, Upendra Mitra contextualizes his work as offering an aperture into critically examining the trajectory of the nationalist movement. He writes, "The hopes for our nation's advancement are, today, throbbing in our veins. But how did we fall so low? By what did we lose everything? And *how can we retrieve our lost selves*? These are the only questions in our modern progressive minds [and] that that this book has helped to reveal and confront some of these questions for our class is beyond any doubt" (2nd ed. 1883) [emphasis mine]. By the 1880s, the Mutiny and its major figures like Nana Sahib were no longer subjects of derision for Bengali writers. Instead, the novelists of 1880s and 1890s felt a strong desire to write novels around the lives of these aristocratic rebel leaders and describe the events of the Uprising through their exploits and experiences. Most famously, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, the father of Bengali novel, is recorded as having expressed as his earnest wish to write a novel on the queen of Jhansi, but from which he retracted only in fear of government censure (qtd. in Anil Sengupta 5). Others like Girish Ghosh, who's *Chandra* appeared in 1884, two years after Bankim's *Anandamath*, braved government wrath to write openly about the Uprising. Similarly, a wily Soshee Dutt wrote his English language mutiny fiction in 1877 under the guise of a revenge tragedy.

In the following section, I look at Dutt's English and Upendra Mitra and Girish Ghosh's Bengali novels to draw out a particular emergent discourse from within the dialectical evolution of bourgeois nationalist imaginary in relation to the 1857 Uprising – the discourse of the Hindu

masculinity. Anxieties about colonial rule and domestic Others, including women, Muslims, and the peasantry, as well as the tenuous balance between modernity and tradition achieved through an ideological dissociation of the home from the world, I will show, are inextricable parts of the discourse of masculine identity within colonial nationalist thought. As Mrinalini Sinha observes, the "emerging dynamics between colonial and nationalist politics in the 1880s and 1890s […] is best captured in the logic of colonial masculinity. For colonial masculinity points towards the multiple axes along which power was exercised in colonial India: among or within the colonisers and the colonised as well as between colonisers and colonised" (*Masculinity* 1). Indira Chaudhuri in her study on Bengali masculine identity provides the second crucial vector to the problematic when she adduces the often overlooked issue of the Uprising as a captioning point integral to nationalist musings about masculinity and identity. The Mutiny, Chaudhuri asserts, is "a significant referent in contemporary [mid- and late- nineteenth century Bengal] discourses on identity" as stories about loyalist 'heroes' like the "fighting munsif" were cited widely as examples of physical prowess and Bengali Hindu machismo (*Frail Hero* 23-24). In 1866 for instance, Rajnarayan Basu in his *Prospectus for a Society for the Promotion of National Feeling among Educated Natives of Bengal* stated, "The Society will […] publish tracts in Bengalee, giving, by instances quoted from ancient history of the country, proofs of the military prowess of the ancient Bengalees, and mentioning isolated instances of the existence of such prowess in modern Bengalees also, such as the celebrated "fighting Moonsiff" who figured in the late Sepoy Rebellion on behalf of the English" (qtd. in Chaudhuri 24).[191] Unfortunately, neither Sinha nor Chaudhuri discuss the representational agency of the Mutiny in nationalist discourses. Here I will

[191] Rajnarayan Basu, *Prospectus for a Society for the Promotion of National Feeling among Educated Natives of Bengal* (1866), first appeared in English in the *National Paper*. This 'Prospectus' according to Rajnarayan was directly responsible for inspiring Nabagopal Mitra to insititute the Hindu Mela. For a discussion of Rajnarayan's Prospectus see Chaudhuri *Frail Hero* 13-17.

accordingly elaborate on existing arguments about constructions of gender identity within nationalist discourse by examining Bengali Mutiny fictions as another site employed by the bourgeois nationalists to articulate, challenge, construct, and consolidate colonial masculine Hindu subjectivity and identity. The construction of this identity was also central for the embourgeoisement project that we see in writings of Bankim for instance.

III

Retrieving "Lost Selves"

"[H]ow can we retrieve our lost selves?" – Upendra Mitra asked in his preface to the second edition of his novel *Nana Saheb* published in 1883.[192] This question, he clarifies, is most important for "our modern progressive minds [and] for our class." As an answer, Mitra offers his novel to the readers saying "this book has helped to reveal and confront some of these questions."

At first glance, Mitra's novel is profoundly radical. It is based on the much maligned and hated character of Nana Sahib, whom the British press had christened the "face of evil." In contrast to dominant opinions about the Nana, the full title of Mitra's novel presents him as a hero.[193] On reading the novel however we get mixed impressions about Nana's character. As historian R.C. Mazumdar rightly notes, "[p]erhaps no other leading figure in the great outbreak of 1857 has evoked such diametrically opposite criticism as Nana Sahib" (266). Mitra's novel, too, is ambivalent in its representation of the man the British called the "Beast of Bithur." It

[192] It is interesting that Bholanath Chandra also refers to a certain loss of the self while speaking about the mutiny. This concern with, in fact anxiety over, a loss of self or selves qua the mutiny appears in many vernacular texts from the period, including *Chittabinodini*. It remains a challenge to retrieve all of them and discover the anxiety over this loss in relation to the events of 1857. As my analysis of Tagore's *Gora* in chapter 5 show, Gora, too, is ideologically and psychologically structured by a haunting, an anxiety about his origins – an origin that coincides with the Mutiny.

[193] The full Bengali title is ভারতের সুখ স্বপ্ন নানাসাহেব বা বৃটিশ গৌরব রবি ভারত গগনে or "India's Sweet Dream Nana Saheb or India's Sweetest Dream Nana Sahib." The subtitle interesting counteracts this claim by saying: "The Glowing British Sun on the Indian Sky." See, Chakraborty *Banga Sahitye* 286.

neither condemns Nana as a villain nor does it celebrate him as a hero; the text presents a vacillating narrative where, at times, the Nana is a victim of betrayals and, at other times, a cruel perpetrator of inconceivable evils. By contrast, the Uprising is most unequivocally qualified as a war of national independence. And though national independence is presented as Nana's most cherished dream, the novel leaves hardly any doubt in the minds of its readers that Nana's weak character is responsible for the failure of the revolution. Nana's greatest fault in the novel is his weakness for women. This eventually leads him to alienate his most trusted comprador Nanakchand, who subsequently betrays Nana to the British. Though there is a strong and consistent suggestion that the revolt was compromised by other betrayals as well, in the end it is Nana's incapacity to provide leadership, being too preoccupied with pleasures of the flesh, which is presented as compromising the rebellion.

The similarity between Mitra's characterization of Nana and Bankim's hero Sitaram is striking. (Sitaram is the hero of Bankim's last novel, *Sitaram*, published in 1887). In Bankim's novel, Sitaram is a Hindu feudal lord under the overlordship of the Muslim Nawab of Bengal. Turn of events force him to oppose the tyrannical rule of the Nawab and declare independence. With might of arms and canny intelligence he successfully establishes a Hindu kingdom. As people flock from all over Muslim Bengal to find refuge in Sitaram's kingdom, Sitaram himself starts to change from a moral and upright person to being a profligate. His interest shifts from governance and protection of his kingdom to women. Eventually, taking advantage of misadministration and weakening of his army the Nawab destroys Sitaram's kingdom. In both novels we witness moral failure being equated with political failure. The destruction of the family and disintegration of monogamist conjugal relations lead to intrigue, betrayals, and finally the destruction of both Nana and Sitaram. In both novels we see an attempt by the authors to

foster an economy of sexual desire through the institutions of marriage and family as part of a pedagogic effort to discipline bodies and identities.

Some critics contend that Mitra by choosing to write a novel about Nana, at a time when dominant public opinion was against the dispossessed prince, already pays him respect (See, Chakraborty *Banga Sahitye* 291). Others dismiss this argument by citing innumerable descriptions of Nana's debauchery and cruelties in the novel (ibid. 292). Both sides unfortunately overlook Mitra's stated ideology for writing the novel. In his own words, the novel is aimed at "reveal[ing] and confront[ing]" questions crucial for the growth and strengthening of the new nationalist consciousness. While the rebellion is described as a right step towards achieving national freedom, the leaders of the revolt are criticized for failing to guide it through to its logical end. Lack of cooperation and coordination among its principal leaders, endless self-serving intrigues and palace politics, and a general incompetence of leadership are portrayed as the chief reasons for the failure of the Mutiny. But these failures are not documented simply for criticizing the rebel leaders or dismissing the Mutiny on the whole as a disorganized venture. Instead, it is sufficiently clear from Mitra's "preface," these weaknesses are described to caution the bourgeois, the new directors of the nationalist movement. Following imperial discourses about Oriental degeneration as a product of Asiatic mode of living and thinking, Mitra's novel paints the leaders of the late rebellion as sign posts of a degenerate past, entangled in superstitions, irrational beliefs, outdated military tactics, and, above all, a corrupt despotic life style of earthly and material pleasures. In alignment with nascent nationalist discourses about reconstituting masculinity through retrieval of martial Aryan past and western ideals of rationalist positivism, Mitra's novel is an exercise in "pedagogic performativity" – the Mutiny articulates the loss of Hindu-Aryan masculine vigor, strength of character, and martiality. Nana

Sahib fails because of his decentered situation – he is alienated from both Hindu-Aryan martial past as well as Western rational modernity. He acts as the symbol of Indian and Hindu masculinity that has deteriorated as a result of the weakening of the moral fiber of the nation as a whole. Nana is a 'lost self.' The moral of the novel is crystal clear: a masculine self – virile and disciplined – must be retrieved through a return to the ideals of an Aryan Hindu past and reinvented through new found knowledge of western positivism. Only then can the future of the country be secured. Strict disciplining of the body and control over the senses are a must for the bourgeois if they are to succeed in their efforts to supplant British rule and assume leadership of the nation on their own shoulders. The national leaders must overcome attraction of women, shun cruelties and irrational excesses (even against enemies), and, lastly, assume the responsibility and leadership of the uneducated masses. Overall, the demand is for perfect men, that is, 'new' men who are well versed in tradition as well as western modernity, and masculine enough to lead the nation out of colonial rule. While for Gobindacharan Ghosh, the author of *Chittabinodini*, the Uprising resulted in the loss of Indian selves, for later writers like Mitra and Bankim, the loss was a direct result of thousand years of servitude and the Mutiny was an enunciation of this loss in most evident terms. Overall, the Mutiny is not a moment to be regretted, rather it should be recognized as signaling the need to recover and reclaim lost subjectivities, identities, and manliness.

Multiple interpretations of the discourses of masculinity and disciplining as presented in Mitra's (and Bankim's) novel can be made. On the one hand, following the arguments of Mrinalini Sinha, Indira Chaudhuri, and Sikata Banerjee we can discern the workings of material contexts and historical forces – the rise of muscular Christianity in England, the internalization of European value systems by the colonial bourgeois in India, and the resultant emergence of

revivalist tendencies within the indigenous culture as an epiphenomenon of colonial practice and local negotiations with it. The problem with this reading lies in its corroboration of the view that indigenous nationalist thought is a derivative (*re*)formulation of the colonial/imperial discourse. Such an argument reproduces the fallacious idea of the colonized as an objective receptacle bereft of subjective volition. Alternatively, we can approach the issue from the perspective of Ashis Nandy who argues that these derivations (both direct and revivalistic) were not simply a mimicking of Western ideals, but an "attempt to explain the West [and Western ideals] in Indian terms and to incorporate it in the Indian culture as an unavoidable experience" ('Intimate' 22). At the core of this practice is the reinterpretation of the 'past' – sacred texts as in Bankim's writings on Krishna or the Mutiny as in Mitra's representation of the event in his novel – and their explanation through values of the present. In other words, values borrowed from dominant colonial discourses are legitimized and/or redefined through imaginary identifications with values classified as belonging to a Hindu-Aryan past.[194] That is to say, ideals of austere masculine Hinduism did not emerge as a derivative discourse, nor were the central tenets of these ideals loaned from dominant colonial discourse or Christianity. Rather, as Nandy explains while discussing Bankim's essay on Krishna, "the qualities of Christianity [or West] which seemingly gave Christians [or the colonizer] their strength" are rediscovered as pre-existing within Hinduism (ibid. 22-23). Mitra, too, can be identified as performing similar ideological maneuverings – marginalizing Nana and the sepoys as 'lost souls' and insisting on a retrieval of masculine subjectivity already present within Hinduism. This effort at masculinization and disciplining of the body is not simply a reaction against imperial accusations of Hindu

[194] For Bankim's essay on Krishna and his project of redefining Hindu culture and masculinity through Krishna see, *Krishnacārita* in *BR* vol. 2. 407-583. For critical discussions of the essay and Bankim's ideological project see, Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy* and Chatterjee's *Nationalist Thought*, espc. 70-72.

effeminacy and cowardice, but an ideological subversion of the dominant discourse and psycho-cultural sensibility engendered as a result of British hegemonic dominance over the middle-class.

Bourgeois Identity and Nationalist Thought: The 'Warrior-Monk'

This "new framework of political culture" within which discourses disseminating the new ideology of ascetic masculinity circulate is evidenced by the rise of the 'warrior-monk' hero as a character type in late- nineteenth century Bengali fiction.[195] The 'warrior-monk' hero is the most refined and iconic form of Hindu masculine subjectivity representing devotion, asceticism, learning, and discipline in one individual. The best example of the type is found in Bankim Chatterjee's *Anandamath*, which following its publication in 1882 singularly galvanized the nationalist imaginary into its most distinguishable form. United by a strict code of ascetic conduct derived from reinterpretations of *Sanatan Dharma*, Chatterjee's warrior-monks form a sacred brotherhood devoted to the cause of rescuing their mother-land from the acerbic occupation of Muslim rulers. The novel however is not a mutiny fiction; it is set in the 1770's and except for the first edition the British are not identified as the enemy.[196]

It is not possible to enter a detailed discussion of the novel here. But four critical and interrelated discourses from the novel must be mentioned. These are: 1) Bankim's conceptualization of the nation (দেশ) as motherland (মাতৃভূমী) or India as BharatMata (ভারতমাতা); 2) his treatment of space and temporality; 3) the issue of resistance to foreign rule; and, 4) the

[195] For Vivekananda's adoption of the image of the warrior-monk, see Banerjee *Make me a Man!*

[196] The change from the first edition to the subsequent ones is striking simply because in the first edition the sacred brotherhood is shown in direct confrontation with British troops and British rule over Bengal is identified as tyrannical. In the following editions, and following government censure, Bankim changed all references to the British by substituting Muslims in their place. However for generations of Indian nationalists, both constitutional followers of nationalism and militants, Bankim's novel was as sacred as the *Gita* – the song 'Vande Mataram,' first published as part of the novel became the war-cry for Indian nationalists across the board. For a discussion of the novel, its history, context, and changes made by Bankim in the wake of British censure, see, Chittaranjan Bandopadhyay's 'Introduction' to *Anandamath* 30-34, 35-42, 45-55. Julius J. Lipner's 'Introduction' to the recent English translation is also a good source for the background, history, and inspirations behind Bankim's novel. See, Lipner 3-124. I use here Chittaranjan Bandopadhyay edited 1983 reprint of the first edition of the novel.

representation of colonial subjectivity. All these are, needless to add, circumscribed by an overarching reinterpretation of Hindu-Aryan past and a vision of nationalism particularly attuned to and borrowed from the immediate reality of bourgeois experience with British colonial rule in the post-mutiny period, i.e., a notion of history.[197]

At the heart of Bankim's novels such as *Sitaram* and *Anandamath* is the issue of history – in direct response to Western claims about the absence of history or the 'Spirit of History' within Asiatic consciousness Bankim's essays and novels articulate the importance of and the need to resituate the colonized subject within history.[198] Drawing from the European linear and progressive model of history and the theory of events as bound to modalities of causality, nationalists like Bankim evoke through their writings an idea of Indian history as organized around a rupture. As Indira Chaudhuri notes, the Bengali bourgeois under pressure to overwrite the imposed cultural condition of being effeminate devised a unique historiographical project to explain the predicament. For intellectuals like Bankim and Rajnarayan were not convinced that the Bengali was innately effeminate or weak. Instead, as we see in Bankim's essays and Rajnarayan's 'Prospectus,' they believed in an ancient Hindu-Aryan past when the Bengali was martial. Therefore, to explain the present lack of martiality and courage in the Bengali, the intellectual elite immersed themselves in reviving and revising India's ancient Aryan past. This historiographical project, as Chaudhuri says, aimed at drawing "attention to the rupture between past and present, between the time that was and the time that is, often characterizing the transition from past to present in terms of a fall." This 'fall,' Chaudhuri contends, was then attributed by the Bengali intellectuals to the corruption of Hindu society, to the unfortunate

[197] For an outstanding work on Bankim in English see, Kaviraj *The Unhappy Consciousness*.
[198] For a list of these essays see my footnote 13 above. For a discussion of Bankim's essays on history see Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments*. Some suggest that it was Nilmani Basak, a text-book writer, who first regretted the lack of a history of India. In his ভারতবষের ইতিহাস [History of India] (1857), he writes "our boys are lamentably ignorant of the greatness of India's past." Qtd. in Dasgupta 'History in Bengali Literature' 30.

dissipation of the "self-sufficient, superior, and above all patriotic" fervors which characterized ancient Hindu-Aryan society and life in the past, under the influence of foreign rule (*Frail Hero* 57-58). In Upendra Mitra's novel and Bankim's *Sitaram* we see clearly how this 'fall' and consequent weakening of the Hindu (male) character is presented as responsible for the failure of Rebellion against foreign oppression.[199]

The historiographic construction of a temporal framework in Bankim's *Anandamath* is tied up with the assertion of the nation as motherland. The nation is identified as the Mother, a feminine deity, who is in a progressive state of decay following the demise of Hindu rule and the onset of Muslim occupation of the subcontinent. The Mother is described in three stages – the Mother as she *was*, the Mother as she *is*, and the Mother as she *will be* following the end of Muslim rule. Resistance or more-specifically anti-colonial resistance (against the British in first edition and then the Muslims in subsequent editions) is therefore integrally tied up with the question of history and religion.[200] The work of the sacred brotherhood, the *Santans* or children

[199] A similar argument about the failure of the 1857 Mutiny would be forwarded about thirty years later by the exiled nationalist leader Madam Bhikaji Rustomji Cama, popularly known as Madam Cama, an ardent advocate of militant nationalism. While exiled in London she reviewed V.D. Savarkar's book *War of Indian Independence* in her paper, provocatively titled *Bande Mataram* [Hail to Motherland], in April 1910. While agreeing with Savarkar on all issues, the review disagreed on one important topic: what caused the failure of the Uprising. While Savarkar wrote of treacheries and betrayals, the review insisted that the Indians lost the war in spite of numerical superiority because the British were "more determined men." It accordingly professed the need to "work in earnest spirit to renovate the lost manhood of the nation so that in the coming revolution the tables may be turned on our enemies." Qtd. in Banerjee, *Make me a Man* 66-67.

[200] It must be mentioned that a seamless identification of Bankim as communal or as the first nationalist to introduce communal ideas is problematic. For in spite of situating the Muslims as the enemy in a number of his novels and essays, Bankim's idea of the 'Muslim as the enemy' is neither singular nor linear. In fact, Bankim makes it very clear that not all Muslims are bad or the enemy. The Pathans, for example, are distinguished from the Mughals, the Delhi Sultanate from the Mughal Empire, and Akbar is identified as the most cruel and evil of all Muslim rulers. Bankim also does not call Muslim rule of Bengal as bad, rather, and most interestingly, he relocates *renaissance* of Bengali thought and Hindu culture in the period of Delhi Sultanate in Bengal. See, for example, Bankim's বাঙ্গালার ইতিহাস সম্বন্ধে কয়েকটি কথা ['Few Words Relative to the History of Bengal'] and বাঙ্গালার ইতিহাস ['History of Bengal'] in *BR*, vol. 2. 336-340; 330-333. For Partha Chaterjee's discussion on Bankim's engagement with the question of Hindu-Muslim 'secular' social existences see, *Nation and Its Fragments* 109-115. Similar to the point above it should also be also kept in mind that Bankim uses 'Bengali' interchangeably with India or 'Bharatvarshiya' and Hindu. Consequently, at times when Bankim is writing about the history of Bengal he is indeed referring to the geographical and ethnic space of Bengal, which then can be taken as a metaphorical space for whole of India. At other times, when he speaks of Bengal or Bengali he is speaking of India, Indians, and Hindus as a whole.

of the venerated feminine deity representing the Motherland, is to alleviate her abject condition by uprooting foreign rule. Theirs is a task of restoring societal existence fit for the Mother. The resuscitation of the Mother to her past glory and the military and spiritual struggle involved in the process against foreign (*mleccha*) rule is delineated as the pathway (*marga* or the spiritual roadway to self-assertion and uplifting of the soul) towards retrieving and reclaiming lost Hindu-Aryan masculinity and culture. This struggle, as Satyananda explains to the new recruit and hero Mahendra in the novel, demands complete devotion to the cause, and a corresponding retraction from the pleasures of domestic (*garhasthya* or family) life. As scholars observe, Bankim's novel successfully fleshes out the terrain of nationalist thought and discourse by decisively conceptualizing the nation or *desha* as the Mother in distress, thus galvanizing desire for rescuing/saving her as part of a sequential chain of complementary desires with significant ideological implications. Central to these are the revisioning, reinterpretation, and rewriting of Indian history and the creation of a culture that is at once similar to but superior to the West's in terms of spiritual consciousness.

In his essays *Krisnacārita* and *Dharmatattava*, Bankim advocates the superiority of Hindu religion over Buddhist and Semitic religions in categorical terms. Describing Krishna as a "Hindu ideal" and "superior to the Christian ideal," Jesus, Bankim writes,

> Krishna is the true man […] Krishna himself was householder, diplomat, warrior, law-giver, saint and preacher; as such, he represents a complete human ideal for all these kinds of people […] We cannot appreciate the comprehensiveness of the Hindu ideal by reducing it to the imperfect standards of the Buddhist or Christian ideals of mercy and renunciation (*BR* vol. 2 516-517).[201]

[201] I use here Partha Chatterjee's translation of this passage; see *Nationalist Thought* 70.

At first glance, Bankim's ideas appear as directly derived from dominant colonial discourses and in continuance with Orientalism – his theorizations of India's degradation over the ages and resultant subjugation under foreign rule, his views on the character of the Indian people, and most significantly his attempt to unite western scientific rationalism with Hindu spirituality identifies him as a perfect product of the colonial educational system. However, as Partha Chatterjee explains, Bankim's elaborate theorizations of Indian history, culture, and subjectivity are not merely derivative in nature, rather these provide through a critical assertion and investigation of Orientalist modes of thinking a "specific subjectivity to the East […] which is active, autonomous and undominated" (Chatterjee *Nationalist Thought* 65-66). Krishna to Bankim embodies that spirit. Bankim, for that matter, never accepted immutability of the Indian character as a determined fact. Instead, he strongly believed in the possibility of "transformation" of the national character through the development of a subjective/National *will*. It was clear to him that without a national religion no national character can be built. And without a national character, no nation can be constructed.[202] For Bankim, as Chatterjee contends, this National Will was a matter of the nation uniting, thinking, and acting collectively. The ideological project behind the writing of his essays and novels, therefore, was to "initiate 'progress' by transforming the backward culture of his nation" through the revival and authentic documentation of *real* Indian history. True accounts of Indian Hindu History, which have been variously maligned, first, by Muslim chroniclers and, then, by the British, Bankim believed, when retold properly will ultimately awaken the Indians to their potential – unite them and give them a collective consciousness.[203] Bankim stoutly believed that true Indian (read Hindu-Aryan) history would not

[202] In his *Dharmatattava*, Bankim says, "a national character is built out of the national religion […] I do expect that if intellectuals accept this religion, a national character will finally be built." *Dharmatattava* in *BR*, vol. 2 651. I use Chatterjee's translation, see *Nationalist Thought* 73.
[203] For a discussion of Bankim's ideology and nationalist thought see, Chatterjee *Nationalist Thought* 54-84.

only demonstrate Indians as culturally and spiritually superior than the rest, but also inspire the presently subjugated people by reminding them of their past glories and achievements. Throughout his writings, from his essays on historiography to his treatise on 'The Theory of Religion' (1888) to his last books, especially, *Krishnacāritra* [The Life of Krishna] (1886), Bankim was involved in building up a 'system of culture' that would specifically through a mix of 'revivalism' and adaptation of Western scientificity produce a transformative colonial culture and rescue the "Bengali […] a creature of his circumstances [from] circumstances [that] do not come under his control" (cited in Chatterjee *Nationalist Thought* 54).[204] He aspired to generate out of his rigorous interpretations of *Sanatan dharma* and Vedic texts, including the *Gita*, "a cultural ideal" that was exclusively Indian but resonant with whatever was "valuable in the culture of the West" in order to "produce the complete and perfect man – learned, wise, agile, religious and refined – a better man than the merely efficient and prosperous Westerner" (ibid. 67). In the mind of this exponential genius and, perhaps, the first systematic expounder of nationalist thought in India, there was no iota of doubt regarding what was required for the nation's cultural and subjective regeneration – "the re-establishment of a harmonious unity of religion and politics, harmony between a comprehensive ethical ideal and the practice of power" (ibid. 70).

In reading Bankim, it is imperative to keep in mind the material and political situation of the times. It was next to impossible to express subversive ideas in writing without inviting the wrath of the administration. Bankim's writings negotiate this in a number of ways: sometimes we find the uncolonizable voice of Kamalakanta throwing colonial knowledge into a dizzying fit and at other times Bankim retracts after making a subversive statement against imperialism to disingenuously suggest that he is untrained to judge political issues. The radical revolutionary

[204] The quotation is from Bankim's immensely popular novel *Kapalkundala*, (1866), I. ch. 8.

vision contained in *Anandamath*, too, could not have been expressed openly nor was there any means of executing the vision at the level of political reality. The desire to save the Mother in the novel is inextricably tied up with the advertising of a perfect fantastic condition of existence within which both Hindu-Aryan culture and masculine virility can be reclaimed. The ideology of rescuing the Mother from the rapacious rule of foreigners is connected to the fantasy of claiming masculine power and a 'culture of power' functioning in harmony with religion. At the interstices of this psychological desire to thwart dominant imperial discourses and substitute these by a home-grown bourgeois set rest a series of more inconspicuous ideological operations – the reorganization and gendering of social spaces, displacement and distancing of all non-bourgeois classes, and, most importantly, the legitimization of masculine bourgeois subjectivity and world view as the only form of political, social, cultural, and representational identity for the subcontinent.

The *Santans* in the novel, for instance, possess their distinct social, political, legal, and cultural orders – strict hierarchies and codes of conduct regulate their military and daily life style. These primarily include complete abstinence from sexual activities, daily worshipping of the Motherland, and rigorous training in the arts of warfare – and if any *Santan* is discovered violating these rules the penalty is death. In a certain way, the concept of a sacred brotherhood adhering to a strict code of law is more reminiscent of Western ideals than anything in the Hindu/Eastern past. As Ashis Nandy puts it, "The order of the *sannyāsīs* in the novel was obviously the Hindu counterpart of the priesthood in some versions of Western Christianity. In fact, their Westernness gave them their sense of history, their stress on an organized religion, and above all, their acceptance of the Raj as a transient but historically inevitable and legitimate phenomenon in Hindu terms" made them more 'Western' than Indian (Nandy 'Intimate' 23). The

santan way and the *santan* kind is the only hope for the people of the land dispossessed of all their wealth and reduced to the status of animals by alien rule.[205]

The character of warrior-monks and the idea of a sacred brotherhood engaged in revolutionary war against foreign colonizers return in Girish Chandra Ghosh's mutiny novel *Chandra* (1884). Published only two years after Chatterjee's *Anandamath*, Ghosh's work, written at the age of seventeen, displays unmistakable signs of influence of Bankim's novel. Ghosh's hero, Somnath, is a sanyasi-rebel or warrior-monk like Satyananda, Mahendra and the *Santans* in Chatterjee's novel. Unlike Bankim, however, young Ghosh appears completely nonchalant about the threat of administrative reprisal against him or his novel – *Chandra* is set in the Mutiny and describes a group of warrior-monks inciting rebellion against the Raj and confronting the British military in battle. Girish Ghosh (1844-1912) is today better known as a theatre personality and regarded as one of the founding fathers of Bengali theatre for his close association with the National Theatre, which was established in 1872. Ghosh, however, also penned three novels, the first of which, *Chandra*, was serialized in a relatively little known monthly, *Kusum Mala*, through 1884 to 1885.[206] Best known for his nationalist plays like *Sirajudaulah*, *Mir Kasim*, *Chatrapati*, all written during the political turmoil of the 'Partition of Bengal' in 1905, Ghosh's mutiny novel *Chandra* is hardly discussed nowadays either in context of Ghosh's literary career or nineteenth century Bengali literature.

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[205] The brotherhood is through and through a male order. However, as Sikata Banerjee notes, Bankim does introduce the possibility for women to participate in the revolutionary war – "in this narrative of ascetic, masculine Hinduism […] women can negotiate a space if they are willing to *temporarily* take on masculine attributes, that is, to erase outer markers of their femininity and return willingly to their roles as wife and mother once danger to the mother-land is over." See, Banerjee *Make me a Man* 62. We see Shanti, wife of one of the warrior-monks arming herself and vowing to remain celibate just like the men. In Bankim's *Sitaram*, *Durgeshnandini*, and *Debi Chaudhurani* women who join the political struggle of the outside world return to their homes and assume their feminine roles as soon as a peaceful resolution is achieved. More generally, as Indira Chaudhuri asserts, "a woman's physical presence had to be subjected to strict surveillance within the discourse on asceticism […]" (*Frail Hero*134).

[206] The other two novels are *Jhalowar Duhita* ('Utvodhan' 1305-06) and *Leela* ('Natya Mandir' 1317-18). *Chandra* was published independently as a book only in 1963.

The plot of *Chandra* is meandering and riddled with confusing subplots. The main plot revolves around the story of a foundling, Haran, who is adopted by a poor Brahmin couple. The family breaks up after Ramchand, Haran's adoptive father is wrongly accused of theft and jailed by the local zamindar. Haran and his mother find shelter at the house of another zamindar but Haran is chased out from there on suspicions of being a thief. The young Haran is adopted by Janardan, a *sanyasi*, and renamed Somnath. Somnath grows up as a 'warrior-monk,' trained in martial arts and ascetic virtues. During the Mutiny, Somnath, now in his youth, visits sepoy regiments to incite rebellion against the British. He acts as part of a secret *sanyasi* organization led by the fierce Janardan. One day Somnath rescues Chandra, an orphan girl who had grown up in missionary care, from drowning. Both fall in love immediately but Somnath refuses her under pressure from Janardan who reminds Somnath of his celibate vows and commitment to the cause of freedom. Janardan cautions Somnath that if the latter compromises his duty to the nation for love, Janardan will have no option but to kill Chandra. The tragic irony, one amongst many in the novel, is that Chandra is Janardan's long lost daughter. At around the same time, the readers are introduced to a notorious outlaw by the name of Ramchand. This Ramchand is none other than Somnath or Haran's father, who after escaping from jail joined a group of robber-outlaws. The lost families unite at the end in midst of a raging war between the rebels and British troops. In this conflict, all characters except Chandra, Somnath, and Somnath's mother (who all this while had been searching for his son) are killed. While Janardan, the fierce *sanyasi*-rebel dies fighting, Somnath is captured and imprisoned in Calcutta. He is released only after Chandra pleads with 'Clemency' Canning. A freed Somnath returns to propose marriage to Chandra, but she refuses and leaves on pilgrimage.

The desperate question asked by Upendra Mitra – 'what is to be done, how can we retrieve our lost selves' – appears to be answered in Ghosh's novel through Somnath. Somnath is an iconic image of the masculine warrior-monk – he fights against the British in open war; he avoids women and sacrifices Chandra to serve his motherland; he saves European women from imminent death at the hands of fanatic sepoys etc. Somnath's 'control' over both Muslims of the land and the Hindu sepoys is one of his formidable strengths – "all the Muslims listen to me. So do the sepoys at Barrackpur, Dumdum, and Hoogly." However, what distinguishes him from the uneducated sepoys or tyrannical feudal leaders like Nana is his compassion for women, children, and the weak. Thus while the sepoys are seen dancing madly enthused at the prospect of slaughtering "innocent" European women and children, Somnath is visibly disgusted at their mercenary and barbaric attitude. He refuses to kill innocent people, even if they are his enemy, and manages to traffic the captive Europeans away from harm's way by deluding the sepoys (this act of kindness later helps him to gain pardon from the administration).

Ramen Barman contends that Ghosh's novel, in spite of claiming historical validity, completely ignores historical facts and timelines (qtd. in Chakraborty *Banga Sahitye* 297-298). Correct as he is, I see no reason why any of the novels published during 70s and 80s on the Mutiny either in India or England should be judged as historical novels. These are more correctly romances, leaning more towards "history as drama" than "history as document" (Bandopadhyay 'Eighteen-Fifty-Seven 18). To read these novels as history or to expect them to be historically accurate is to miss the point about their ideological necessity and function – constructions of imaginary subjectivities. These novels were part of the ideologically necessary reinvention of a tradition for historically conceptualizing identities within the colonial context. The novels do not

aim at historical accuracy; rather they seek to shape existing history to meet their ideological purpose through the literary form of the romance.

The choice of the romance as a form or genre can be attributed to the popularity enjoyed by Walter Scott as a novelist in late- nineteenth century Bengal. However, the practical ideological purpose served by the romance cannot be overlooked as well. The romance, as Frederic Jameson notes, allows the delineation of "symbolic answer[s] to the perplexing question[s] of how my enemy can be thought of as being evil (that is, as other than myself and marked by some absolute difference), when what is responsible for his being so characterized is quite simply the identity of his own conduct with mine, that which – points of honor, challenges, tests of strength – he reflects as in a mirror image" (Jameson 118). Jameson's definition articulates the Lacanian notion of identity as imaginary and the necessity for a subject to situate (misrecognize) an other as Other in order to attain his/her own distinct symbolic identity. In Indian mutiny romances, like Mitra's *Nana Sahib* or Ghosh's *Chandra*, this question of symbolic identity is at the core of all textual problematics surrounding the drama of the Uprising – the new nation and its leaders must be different from the perpetrators of the Mutiny and at the same time the past must be shown as containing the present. If we intervene into Ghosh's textual politics and in particular his representation of Somnath, we see a decisive splitting off of the sepoys and their feudal leaders in contrast to Somnath as Others. This allows Ghosh to distance the native bourgeois from the 'regressive' "blood thirsty" sepoys, the obese Nana, and the Mutiny as led by these factors more generally. This distance is crucial for reconstructing the nationalist movement in contrast to the regressive rebellion and for laying claim upon modernity unavailable to any other indigenous groups except the Bengali. Correspondingly, the revision of the Mutiny and its events through the insertion of the educated middle-class hero into a spatio-temporal register

from which he had been historically absent, and against which he must also assert his own progressive identity, entail a fantastic reworking of bourgeois consciousness. Fiction as a symptom of this lack in history – a lack within bourgeois history and desire to be an integral part of colonial history – and obeying the classic Freudian model of 'wish-fulfillment,' gave the bourgeois the unique opportunity to assert their sovereign control over the history of the Mutiny by writing their ideological agencies into the Uprising. Bengali mutiny fictions are consequently fraught by a tension between revising the Uprising as a proto-nationalist moment and a desire to distance it at the same time as regressive in context of rational politics and modernity. In the process, these enunciate the commonplace tropes of nationalist thought – revival and regeneration of cultural superiority, reinvention of martial masculinity, and the dislocation of the political (world) from the private (home).[207]

Bourgeois Identity and Nationalist Thought: The 'Reluctant Vigilante'

Bengali mutiny fictions do not simply function as discursive sites for constructing a monothematic national identity. They also articulate and serve to negotiate bourgeois anxieties over belonging and not belonging to the catastrophic events of 1857. The problem with the bourgeois during the Mutiny, as I have discussed above, was that they could not decide on the most expedient manner of engaging with the sudden events that began in the summer of 1857. While the bourgeois dreamt about self-rule with them in positions of power, and in the mutiny they must have sensed a pleasant whiff of that prospect following the abrupt collapse of British rule over large parts of the country, they were surely not prepared to assume the task of leadership for two reasons. One, as with the British, the rebellion surprised them with its suddenness and ferocious spread, taking away in its wake any opportunity for the bourgeois to

[207] See, Chatterjee, 'The Resolution of the Woman's Question in Nationalist Thought.' Also, *Nation and Its Fragments* 116-157.

establish a hold on the proceedings. And, two, the bourgeois was in no mood to accept the sepoys or their feudal leaders as their sovereign masters. In fact, the bourgeois suspected the sepoys of turning the clock back on western education and culture.

It is not surprising then that unlike the sepoys or the Nana, Somnath refuses to murder European women and children, though he too desires the demise of British rule. What differentiates Somnath from the sepoys can be called his liberal sensitivity and discretionary use of power. Somnath in this context is the perfect conscious subject, infused with the eternal human desire for independence but modern enough and moral enough to follow his desire conscientiously. He is not the Eastern rogue, a thugee or *badmash*, with no consideration for the lives of innocents. Alternatively, and perhaps a little provocatively, we can also claim that the difference between Somnath and the sepoys is at the level of their respective ethical pursuits of desire. Both desire absolute annihilation of British rule from the subcontinent, but while the sepoys are unconstrained by moral qualms and ready to extend their desire to its ethical edge by physically exterminating *all* forms of alien rule or life, Somnath as the representative of the colonial bourgeois stops short of taking that step. Somnath drives a wedge within an ethical war against a moral-unethical system through the introduction of morals, that is, the introduction of western-Christian parameters and metaphysics. His action hybridizes the site of resistance forcing it to conform to designs of western metaphysics … under no circumstances can morality or the question of good and evil be factored into anti-colonial resistances other than as a useful tool for the dominant power. Morality helps dominant powers to conveniently condemn resistance as evil and bereft of any consciousness; as such, a resistance founded on regressive ideals and driven by petty desires, thus lacking any pragmatic social or political vision. Somnath performs the critical task bestowed upon the comprador middle-class in colonial situations,

namely, the disintegration of colonial indigenous society across religious, racial, ethnic, caste, class, and gender lines. His moral behavior also helps him to earn clemency, while sepoys were mercilessly hanged or blown away from canons.

One might try and speculate here about what Bankim would have done if he were to write *Chandra*? I believe, if allowed to write freely, he would not have hesitated from showing Somnath as an immoral but ethical character. For in Bankim's 'culture of power,' drawn from Vedic literatures, the "use [of] violence to prevent one who does violence is not immoral; on the contrary, it is the highest moral duty" (*BR* vol. 2. 562). In his *Krishnācarita*, as Partha Chatterjee notes, Bankim equates war against an oppressor with an "ethical philosophy of power" (*Nationalist Thought* 71). Bankim's ideas can be gleaned from a number of passages scattered throughout this piece, especially his interpretations of the *Mahabharata*. Bankim asserts, for example, "I will not desire a paradise given to the pursuit of immoral pleasures. But at the same time, I will not relinquish to the swindler a single grain of what is morally due to me. If I do so […] I will be guilty of the sin of adopting a path that will bring ruin upon society." Similarly, he writes about war and self-defense: "It is moral to wage war in defense of myself and of others. To shy away from doing so is grave immortality. We, the people of Bengal, are bearing the consequences of our immortality for seven hundred years […] the conqueror is a great robber" (*BR* vol. 2 495, 529, 533). [208] But does Bankim's *Anandamath* end with the complete annihilation of the enemy? The answer is 'no,' but the issue is much more complicated in *Anandamath* where the enemy is not the British but the Muslim. What we have at the end of that novel is peace between the Hindu *Santans* and the Muslims brokered by the British, and a professing of faith in the benefits and peaceful possibility of co-existence under future British

[208] I use Chatterjee's translation in *Nationalist Thought* 71.

rule.[209] The monks retire praising British munificence but not before impressing upon the readers of the novel that if push comes to shove, the Hindu man can surface again with his weapons and challenge any oppressive power.

Are these compromised endings in Bankim and Ghosh results of their strict adherence to history? Or, was it a fear of British chastisement that forced them to end their utopian romances on national liberation in the way they did? Or, are these signs of a split consciousness that even twenty years after the Mutiny could not broach the subject without reservations, fears, anxieties, and doubts? I think a combination of all these factors are responsible for restricting the bourgeois from coming out in open to celebrate the Mutiny even when they were writing fantastic romances about the event. The creation of a self-respecting and self-sufficient Indian national culture, as proposed by Bankim and others following him, was a difficult task. On the one hand, it was impossible for the 'western' educated bourgeois to ignore the 'gifts' of rational scientific systems of thought introduced to the colony as a direct result of colonialism, while at the same time it was equally necessary to create an exclusive Indian culture in opposition to western cultural and epistemic hegemony. The middle-path demanded a revivalist vision that showed the presence of 'western' ideals already embedded in the ancient cultural texts of the Hindus. This negotiation, unfortunately, is destined to succumb to the dominant ideology from time to time, especially if the proponents and theorizers of the new culture are themselves deeply influenced

[209] A crucial addition in later editions of the novel is an advertisement appended before the novel. It reads: "The Women of Bengal are the mainstay behind Bengalis. Sometimes not. Social revolution is mostly self-flagellation. The revolutionaries suicidal. The British have rescued Bengal from chaos. All these issues are explained in this book." See, *Anandamath*, ed. Chittaranjan Bandopadhyay, p. n.a. The second edition also carried a preface written in English by Keshab Chandra Sen's brother, Krishnabehari Sen. Bankim had hoped that his advertisement and this 'preface' would appease the British administration. It says: "The leading idea of the plot is this – should the national mind feel justified in harbouring violent thoughts against the British Government? Or to present the question in another form, is the establishment of English supremacy providential in any sense? Or to put it in a still more final and conclusive form, with what purpose and with what immediate end in view did providence send the British to this country? […] To put an end to Moslem tyranny and anarchy in Bengal" (85). Also see, Chittaranjan Bandopadhyay's 'introduction' for Bankim's interaction with the Sen brothers over the issue of administrative censure (37-41).

by western education. To be precise, the bourgeois consciousness is split because the class is constituted as such at the very moment of its inception. It cannot conceive of a resistance movement against an alien power without exhibiting this essential character trait of their existential (social, political, and psychological) condition. Both circumstantially and psychologically, bourgeois discourses about anti-colonial resistances are destined for and prone to an axiomatic inability to assert complete erasure of western colonial rule.

The condition of split subjectivity characterizing this class can be traced back to the 'liberal years' of British colonial rule of the 1830s. The liberal desire to create (or, unite) a new class and then split them off from the masses is articulated famously in Macaulay's 'Minute on Indian Education;' in its demand for "a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." What is often overlooked while reading this oft quoted and famous piece of colonial discourse is the political expediency of creating the hybrid class. It is not simply a question of utility – employing the class to act as interpreters and mediators – but of constituting and implanting them within an interconnected social order as an infraction. I am not suggesting that Macaulay in the 1830s was already thinking of how imperial rule could withdraw in the future without disturbing or compromising the capital market system, but surely, in arguing for the necessity of creating a class and "render[ing] them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population," the embryonic presence of an idea for hegemonic retention of exploitative systems of control that would continue to take advantage of the masses in the future is present within Macaulay and the liberal vision in general.[210] More interestingly, by creating a class 'intellectually' resembling the English, the flexibility of employing them as buffers against popular discontent, by telling that they are to

[210] For a detailed argument on this point see Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire*; Metcalf, *The Aftermath of the Revolt*. Metcalf actually shows that both Macaulay and his disciple Trevleyan did believe in the eventual withdrawal of British rule and thus insisted on 'preparing' the middle-class natives for their future task as rulers.

inherit the white Man's position in time, is implicitly present in Macaulay's plan. The failure of the native bourgeois to emerge as leaders of popular uprisings in the nineteenth-century most positively draws an argument in favor of the presence of this ideological acumen in Macaulay's liberal vision. To recast the above more simply: liberal and educational policies of the British colonial government, in my opinion, produced the native bourgeois subject as split. I am not implying at all that the bourgeois were confused or docile, but merely that they were constitutively split; as is perhaps the nature of this class anywhere in the world. They recognize themselves as connected to the masses and identify with the experiences of colonial occupation as felt by the masses. But they also recognize themselves as different from the masses given their ability to appraise science and Enlightenment. As Sudhir Chandra observes, "faith in colonialism despite an understanding of its exploitativeness – this was the paradox of educated consciousness in colonial India" (Chandra 52). It is this split, this paradox, which shapes native bourgeois consciousness of the Mutiny and surfaces again and again at various moments in the history of the subcontinent.

Were the bourgeois aware of this limitation? If yes, how did they explain or critique or excuse it? Were the writers unanimously accepting of nationalist discourses? And, especially in context of mutiny fictions, how did the bourgeois transcend all forms of political and psychological strictures to finally represent such a rabid anti-colonial resistance? In Ghosh's novel we find an interesting possibility for speculating an answer.

The novel follows the usual pattern of representing warrior-monks as ascetics – Janardan chastises Somnath against caring for Chandra. But Ghosh writes into his narrative a subplot that tells an interesting story about Janardan's past, which explains Janardan's strict decree of avoiding contact with women. Janardan, we are told, before embarking on the revolutionary path

against the British was a happily married man with little or no reservations about the British or colonial rule. However, he left home and decided to wage war against British after suspecting his wife of having an affair with a British sergeant. In the novel, it is Janardan's personal life experience with women which inflects his obsessive, almost social, injunction to his disciples against interacting with women (and the British). And it is also his anger over his wife's suspected relationship with a British officer which drives him in war against the British. In the span of few lines, Ghosh pulls Janardan's revolutionary idealism down from its hallowed altar and pathologizes anti-colonial resistance and nationalist ideology. For Janardan's efforts at constructing an ascetic masculine revolutionary national identity through injunction against attachment to women – the identity of the ascetic in control of his instinctual senses – and desire to liberate his nation from British rule are revealed as, paradoxically, products of his own thwarted desire for attachment. It is in the thwarting of desire, a metaphoric anxiety about emasculation or castration caused by his wife's refusal of him sexually, that his desire to symbolically repress sexual drives and establish an ascetic identity is located. *Chandra* pathologizes ideology and nationalist discourse, signifying the historical condition of bourgeois identity or its retrieval as isomorphically related to individual psychosexual history. That is, the history of the bourgeois who are politically, socially, and even sexually incapacitated by British rule; a bourgeois without any stable identity or bourgeois whose identity is marked by his condition of 'not having.'

The crucial desire of the bourgeois 'to be' or gain an identity in positive terms rests on their ability to control and claim history. In context of the nationalist imaginary and monothematic subjectivity built around a harmonious alignment of tradition and western modernity, the Mutiny provides a definitive template for understanding bourgeois desire for the

self as different from the others. Caught in the doldrums of being 'white but not quite' as well as 'brown but not quite,' a realization which dawned most emphatically in the post-mutiny decades, the native bourgeois sought to recreate an identity founded on exclusive grounds – nationalism was pathological stemming from buried anxieties over 'loss' and guilt of not standing up to reclaim it when the opportunity had offered itself in the past, say during the Mutiny. In process, the Bengali bourgeois emerges as a distinct creature parodied and suspected by both the masses and the colonizers[211] – a feeling that still today structures most metropolitan Indian identities and 'Indian' opinions about the Bengali.[212]

If discursive constructions of nationalist identity have their roots in anxieties over historical and sexual identities, these figurations are equally tied to political and ideological concerns. Immediate of these, in context of the Mutiny, was the necessity to condemn the rebellion and profess allegiance to the British. In Ghosh's description of Canning as a kind and benign ruler, we find the most obvious expression of this line of thinking. Ghosh writes: "Canning was then being criticized strongly by the British press of Calcutta. His fault: not declaring Martial Law in Bengal. Neil wanted the rebels to be killed mercilessly all round. But he disagreed and disproved it. He was fighting with the Council to extend clemency to those who surrendered. Everyone was against it. The Council members filed petitions against him. But even against all this opposition, the kind hearted Canning remained firm on his views." It was imperative that the British administration did not deem the nationalists of the 80s similar to the rebels of 1857.

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[211] The disgust with the bourgeois first expresses itself in British writings of the Ilbert bill controversy. Later we find perhaps the most canonized image of this inherently conflictive class in Kipling's *Kim* – Hurree Baboo is the native Bengali bourgeois *par excellance*.

[212] Very recently, the Indian English news channel, CNN-IBN, organized a debate on the question of what 'India' thinks about Bengalees – are they lazy, lacking industriousness and physical strength, are they the most 'intellectual' of all Indians as they claim, do they think they 'invented' the English language, are they all artists and leftists, so forth and so on.

The desire to pacify the government and explain the nationalist position as different from the rebels of 1857, however, can work in tandem with constructions of identity and its logical corollary – the ideological repression of the subaltern-Other. We find this mechanism most vividly illustrated in Soshee Dutt's 1877 English mutiny novel *Shunkur*. The story unlike *Chandra* is relatively straight forward. Two distinct plots run parallel – one, describing the life of Nana just before, during, and after the mutiny, while the second narrate the plot of the eponymous hero Shunkur's life as affected by the Uprising. The first plot shows Nana planning the rebellion aided by his Hindu priest, his Pathan minister Azimullah Khan, and a foreign agent promising help against British on behalf of his sovereign. Nana's wife is the only person who tries to dissuade him from jumping into a rebellion against the powerful British. The plot culminates in Nana's defeat and exile in the pestilences of Nepal. The other plot concerning Shunkur's life and family as destroyed by the Mutiny is what interests me most. The Mutiny in the novel is again not to be judged historically but ideologically. As a narrative strategy, it functions to connect the two plots in an affective relationship – events within the first plot lead to further events and these in turn affect the second plot and lead to subsequent events within the second plot.

The Mutiny entraps Shunkur, an 'every man' Hindu farmer, and alters his life thoroughly reminding one of the classic Lacanian paradigm of the plight of the human subject within the symbolic order – the symbolic exists outside the pale of human knowledge and control, pushing the human creature towards a hapless experience of his own abject existence within this system.[213] Shunkur is a small-time farmer living with his parents and wife in a village near

[213] The classic sentiments of tragedy also surface from this very condition –heroes are pitted against an inordinate Universe governed by fatalistic determinism. Undoubtedly, this situation is similar to the colonial condition and the native bourgeois within it – creatures of circumstances which are beyond their control as Bankim puts it in his 1866 novel, *Kapalkundala*.

Kanpur entirely unaware of the winds of mutiny blowing only a few miles from his home. During the outbreak at Kanpur, Shunkur and his father are away from home. Two Britishers, who escape the massacre at Kanpur, reach Shunkur's village pursued by the rebels. They ask Shunkur's mother and wife for shelter who kindly allow them to hide in their cowshed. However, at night, they take advantage of the two women being alone and rape Shunkur's wife. After this they escape and join the British forces enlisting as officers and participating in counter-insurgency actions. Shunkur's wife ashamed and afraid of the smear the news of her rape would bring to the family leaves home never to return. Shunkur learns of the tragedy after reaching home. Angered, shocked, and desperate he enlists in the British army on pretext of fighting the rebels. But his real intention is to follow the army on campaigns throughout India in order to track down the offenders. He ultimately succeeds in his vendetta while hunting for the Nana in the pestilences of Terai.

Alex Tickell in his introduction to a recently published collection of Soshee's works reads *Shunkur* as reversing the imperial myth of rape and articulating a veiled dissent against colonial rule ('Introduction' 16-18). I need not elaborate on Soshee's ideological agenda of 'writing back,' since Tickell does a brilliant job discussing it. Instead, I will focus on analyzing Soshee's narrative attempts at discursively setting up an image of the avenger as a 'reluctant vigilante' (after extracting his revenge, Shunkur disarms and returns home), next to a subtle repression of the anxiety over subaltern insurgence. The 'reluctant vigilante,' Rini Bhattacharya Mehta has recently suggested, is a variation of the 'warrior-monk' character type and is also found in Bankim's *Anandamath*. Like Mahendra, in Bankim's novel, both Somnath in Mitra's and Shunkur in Soshee's novels return home after their military endeavors to settle down. They represent the ideal Hindu denizen, who is capable yet not inherently violent, a figure drawn from

the life of Krishna who appears only at times of distress to rid the world of all evil; a subject of history who responds to the call of History in order to (re)make history. Of course, the ideological counterpoint to this ideal Hindu citizen of the nation is the Muslim or bigoted sepoys who disrupt life by waging continuous warfare against all non-believers. Historically, and in specific context of the Mutiny, these are the people responsible for all mischief unlike the 'capable yet compliant' Hindu. The ideal of the Hindu bourgeois as martial (hence capable) but disciplined (hence compliant) is embodied in the notion of the "reluctant vigilante."

Shunkur, we must remind ourselves is not a rebel against the government, but he pursues the British officers to avenge himself. What Soshee achieves in refracting Shunkur's aggression against the colonizer through the prism of a revenge narrative is the attenuation of the subaltern's sufferance and dissent. The rape of the subaltern woman in the novel never succeeds in becoming a metaphor for oppressions faced by the peasantry during colonial rule unlike the trope of rape of white women by rebels that becomes a site of ideological congregation for the British. Instead, rape of the native woman is represented as a one-off event, perpetrated by two rogues, and not the British administration as a whole. Similarly, Shunkur's anger and dissent, couched in the garb of a revenge tragedy, are never allowed to accede to the level of being declared as the subaltern's last resort against the wrongs suffered at the hands of the colonizer. Therefore, while the subaltern is reduced to seeking vendetta, his dissent is privatized and what is reconstructed over it are Hindu bourgeois values – the wife after being raped leaves her husband and his home so as not to conjoin him to the stain that afflicts her; while Shunkur, the husband, performs the role of the ideal Hindu husband, Rama like, entering on a long journey to avenge those who violated his wife. Soshee, unlike Bankim Chatterjee or Girish Ghosh, does not marginalize the subaltern. He *uproots* them from their distinct history to overwrite that particular history through

a ‘dominant’ native bourgeois discourse. What this strategic operation attains is the erasure of the anxiety provoking and guilt inducing gap between the native elite and subaltern masses – it homogenizes the colonial space by reconstructing a unified mass of people bound by a common monotheistic identity. But again if this appertains to the construction of an identity by posing the colonizer as the Other, then the anxiety over encountering the dismissal and wrath of that Other returns as a trade-off. For the colonial native elite this prospect was as anxiety provoking as enduring their separation from the masses. Accordingly, a suturing of this possibility is achieved through an amelioration of the colonizer’s concerns with the native bourgeois nationalist movement as similar to that of the ‘retrograde’ Mutiny. This suturing in Soshee’s text is accomplished through a representation of Shunkur’s dissent as provoked. Moreover, by representing the cause of provocation as an unwarranted act of violence inflicted on a helpless women (that is, by reversing the imperial ideological rape script of the Mutiny), Soshee forces his readers to empathize with Shunkur and his plight. It is this empathy on which Soshee depends to qualify Shunkur’s vendetta as justified and morally sanctioned. The colonized malcontent is therefore no longer cast in the image of a religious bigot. In Soshee’s novel, he fulfils his moral and ethical obligation accepted by both ‘western’ and ‘Indian’ standards in avenging the rape of his wife. Very much like the counter-insurgency retaliations by the British troops, which were justified in name of moral retributive justice for the deaths of English women and children, Shunkur’s act of revenge, his killing of two Englishmen, transforms from being an insurrectory act to being a moral duty.

Most importantly, with Shunkur retiring back to his home after exacting his revenge, the ideal of the Hindu subject as a “reluctant vigilante” is consolidated. Unlike the inherently aggressive Muslims or “blood-thirsty” sepoys during the mutiny, Shunkur is a product of history

– he is provoked into action and compelled to undertake his vendetta as a moral obligation, but once done he returns to peaceful coexistence with the British. Soshee's *Shunkur* like Bankim's *Anandamath* presents the Hindu nationalist or insurgent as a "capable yet compliant" subject. They do not engage in mindless massacres or treacherous mutinies. Instead, they merely desire more representation in government as their logical and rightful historical calling – they are prepared to take over from the colonizers the mantle of responsibility for ruling the subcontinent. In other words, they are distinct and they design their distinct identity through scripting of anxieties and tenuous overwriting of these. They are indeed 'frail heroes' inhabiting a 'virile history.'

CHAPTER V

Unequal Partners: Rabindranath Tagore, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, and the Mutiny of Fifty-Seven.

"The core of 'Bande Mataram' is a hymn to goddess Durga; this is so plain that there can be no debate about it. Of course Bankim does show Durga to be inseparably united with Bengal in the song, but no Mussulman [Muslim] can be expected patriotically to worship the ten-handed deity as 'Swadesh' [the nation]. […] The novel *Anandamath* is a work of literature, and so the song is appropriate in it. But parliament is a place of union for all religious groups, and there the song cannot be appropriate. When Bengali Mussulmans show signs of stubborn fanaticism, we regard these as intolerable. If we too copy them and make unreasonable demands, it will be self-defeating. […] In pursuit of our political aims we want peace, unity and goodwill – we do not want the endless tug of war that comes from supporting the demands of one faction over the other."

[Rabindranath Tagore, *SL* 487].[214]

In the thundering roar of 'Din, Din,' which rose to protect religion, when there were evident signs of a cunning, dangerous, and destructive attack on religion dearer than life, and in the terrific blows dealt at the chain of slavery with the holy desire of acquiring Swaraj, when it was evident that chains of political slavery had been put round them and their God-given liberty wrested away by subtle tricks – in these two, lies the root-principle of the Revolutionary War. In what other history is the principle of love of one's religion and love of one's country manifested more nobly than in ours?

[Vinayak Damodar Savarkar *Indian War* 7].

[214] During the 1930s, a debate sprang up regarding the selection of a national song that would successfully unite all communities in India. Bankim's 'Bande Mataram' [Hail to thee Motherland] written in 1882 and a popular war-cry for the nationalists ever since was the favorite choice of many. The young nationalist leader Subhas Bose was aware that the song had many problems. He consulted Tagore who wrote back to young Bose giving his own opinion about the song. After Independence, Tagore's 'Ja Na Gana Mana' was adopted as the National Anthem instead of 'Bande Mataram.' For the text of 'Bande Mataram' and English translations of the song see, Bandopadhyay [ed]. *Anandamath*, pp.n.a.

I

The Nation Revised: (Dis)Engaging the Mutiny

The question of how to engage with colonial rule – through a conciliatory nationalist movement of "appeals and petitions" or by presenting direct armed challenge with the aim of to erasing all vestiges of the colonial machinery – most characteristically differentiates bourgeois nationalist movements from subaltern insurrections in the Indian colonial context.

My discussion of the bourgeois nationalists in the preceding chapter necessitates a thorough exploration of the subaltern perspective with the view of addressing the distinct divergences between the two. But that is only possible after a discussion on the consolidation of the bourgeois led nationalist movement in the early decades of the twentieth century has been done. This chapter will accordingly extend my investigation of nineteenth-century bourgeois nationalist engagement with the 1857 Uprising into the twentieth century through a study of two most interesting, if unequal, figures of Indian nationalism – Rabindranath Tagore and Vinayak Damodar Savarkar.[215] My choice of Tagore and Savarkar is deliberate. It is aimed at explicating how in spite of their ideological differences both share the belief that the Mutiny was a religious war; and how consequently each goes about formulating their vision of the Mutiny qua Indian nationalism on basis of this idea.

[215] During the first decade of the twentieth century, the rise of (Hindu) nationalism and militancy in the subcontinent and the fiftieth anniversary of the Indian Mutiny in 1907 revived the memory of and anxieties about the event. More importantly, with the visit of Prince of Wales in 1905 and then again in 1911 (this time as the King-Emperor) anxieties about terrorist strikes were rampant. Bengal had become such a hotbed of terrorist activities, especially following the proposal of partitioning in 1905 by Curzon, that there was indeed a critical military and political expediency in shifting the capital from Calcutta to Delhi in 1911. During the 1911 Durbar and Investiture ceremony the parade of the 'Mutiny veterans' was a central attraction. See for example, letters written by Mrs. Edith Leslie Gaslock to her sister Mrs. Josephine (Fif) McGeah. Mrs. Gaslock was the wife of L.C.B Gaslock, the person in charge of the Police arrangements for the Royal Camp. She had 'special' seats for watching the parade and ceremony and found it a "spectacle," a "fairy tale." She however found the "doddering" Mutiny veterans marching to the tune of 'See the Conquering Hero Comes' and 'Aud Lang Syne' simply pathetic. See, IOR: MSS EUR C597. Edmund Candler's 1912 novel *Siri Ram – Revolutionist: A Transcript from Life 1907-1910* is especially useful for doing a comparative study between Tagore, Savarkar, and Candler. Unfortunately, I cannot pursue that study presently due to constraints of space.

Of course, the idea of the rebellion as a religious war is derived from imperial discourses and thoroughly impairs any understanding of the complex nature of the uprising. It restricts investigations of the event within an epistemic framework that is European and laden with bourgeois moral-ethical suppositions, thus in opposition to any constructive discussion on the subaltern perspective of the Mutiny. This chapter will therefore also pave way for my final chapter on subaltern consciousness and the most lingering question regarding the Mutiny till today – was the Uprising *really* a religious war? Did the rebels act only out of an anxiety about losing their religions? This becomes a crucial question requiring immediate attention since dominant representations of the Mutiny focus on delineating the Revolt as energized by religious morals. British nineteenth-century historians like Charles Ball, Muslim apologists like Syed Ahmad Khan, nationalist bourgeois like Upendra Mitra to twentieth-century writers like Tagore and John Masters, Indian Marxists like Rajani Palm Dutt and M.N. Roy, postcolonial historians like S.N. Sen, and, more recently, British writers like William Dalrymple and Charles Allen have not only emphasized the ubiquitous rhetoric of *deen* [religion] within rebel consciousness, but they have also overarchingly connected the Mutiny to an anti-liberal, anti-democratic, and anti-progressive consciousness that threatens the return of absolutism in the political sphere. The view positing the Mutiny as a product of mindless bigotry and as aimed at the restitution of irrational medievalism contributes, I will argue, to ideologically signify the event as something definite, namely a religious war, and consolidate identity positions in relation to it. But all this will come in my final chapter. Before that I want to spend time in this chapter elaborating how Tagore and Savarkar envision the Mutiny in their writings and for what purposes.

II

The Anarchy of Emptiness: Tagore and Nationalism I

Rabindranath Tagore's (1861-1941) 'complete' works on the Indian Mutiny is limited to about a dozen pages, if we leave aside his 1910 novel *Gora* where too the Mutiny enjoys, at best, a marginal presence. Tagore's first piece on the Mutiny was an essay about the queen of Jhansi written when he was only sixteen. His short story on the Mutiny, দুরাশা [Durasha], was written twenty-one years later in 1898. These two and the novel *Gora*, all written between 1877 and 1910, are the only writings by Tagore that deal with the Mutiny. It is therefore impossible to adequately analyze the poet's reactions to and understanding of the event without exploring the general pattern of his thought in this period (1880 to 1910) and without contextualizing these texts in relation to his governing beliefs about anti-colonial politics in general. The latter is best amplified through the poet's debate with Gandhi. Known as the Gandhi-Tagore debates, these were public debates that reveal the poet's anxieties over the direction Indian nationalism had taken under Gandhi's tutelage. Ideas and arguments voiced by Tagore in these debates against nationalism as a thought and ideology can be traced back to the early years of the twentieth-century and the poet's dissatisfaction with the excesses of Hindu militant nationalism in Bengal. Both *Gora* and the short story belong to this period (1880-1910) and the Gandhi-Tagore debates elucidate the contexts for studying these texts. I will therefore begin by discussing the debate and then move onto Tagore's writings on the Mutiny.

In the summer of 1921, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, then at the helm of the Indian nationalist movement and the Non-cooperation agitation against the British, wrote an article titled 'The Poet's Anxiety' (*M&P* 65-68).[216] Published in the periodical *Young India*, the article was a response to Tagore's reflections on and critique of the Indian nationalist movement,

[216] For a brief background to this debate between Gandhi and Tagore, see Guha, 'What Gandhi Owed to Tagore.'

specifically two of Gandhi's most cherished "pet formulae" – *Swaraj* [Self-rule/Dominion status] and non-cooperation as a means to *swaraj* (Tagore *SL* 539).[217] Tagore had voiced his opinions on the non-cooperation movement in a series of letters to C.F. Andrews, who had subsequently made these available to the press thus drawing Gandhi's attention, and/or ire, and inaugurating a protracted debate between the two stalwarts on the issue of nationalism, national liberation, and means for achieving national independence.

When Gandhi launched his Non-cooperation movement alongside professing support to the Khilafat Movement, Tagore was in Europe. C.F. Andrews wrote on 3 August 1920 and then again on 9 August 1920 intimating the poet about these developments in India (*SL* 237n1). Though Andrews wrote his first letters in August of 1920, Tagore did not write his most scathing critique of the movement till March 1921 which Andrews published in the May issue of the *Modern Review* (*SL* 258-261). Noting the delay between the reception of the news in 1920 and Tagore's reactions almost a year after, Ramchandra Guha notes that Tagore was most disturbed by Gandhi's condemnation of figures like Rammohan Roy and Lokmanya Tilak in the article "Evil Wrought by the English Medium" that Gandhi published in the April issue of the *Young India*. Perhaps reacting to this article, Tagore in a 10 May letter to Andrews wrote: "[Gandhi] is growing enamoured of his own doctrines – a dangerous form of egotism" (See, Guha 'What Gandhi owed to Tagore'). Gandhi responded with two articles, 'English Learning' and 'The Poet's Anxiety' (June 1921). Tagore's long rejoinder to these, 'The Call of Truth,' was first

[217] The Indian National Congress led by Gandhi as well as the All India Muslim League and other parties did not call for 'complete independence' or *purnwa swaraj* till the 1930s. During the Non-cooperation-Khilafat Movement, Gandhi proposed 'home rule' or Dominion status only. During the mid-20s, owing to pressure from the younger generation within the party like Nehru and the radical, Subhas Chandra Bose, Gandhi 'reluctantly' accepted the call for 'independence' in 1930. Some say the growth in popularity of the militant nationalists and their call for complete Independence since 1905 actually forced Gandhi to change his demand from dominion status to *purnwa swaraj*. The most vocal forerunners in demands for total independence were the Bengal revolutionaries and during the 1920s Bhagat Singh and his Hindustan Socialist Republican Party. See for example, Kuldip Nayyar, *The Martyr: Bhagat Singh Experiments in Revolution*; Rajmohan Gandhi, *Patel: A Life*.

published in Bengali in *Prabasi* and then in the *Modern Review* in English. Gandhi responded yet again with another piece published in his *Young India*, titled 'The Great Sentinel' (13 October 1921). However, following Gandhi's arrest, Tagore suspended the debate between March 1922 and February 1924. But immediately following the release of the nationalist leader, Tagore published two more chastising critiques of Gandhian nationalism – 'The Cult of the Charkha' and 'Striving for Swaraj' (*Modern Review*, September 1925) – condemning Gandhi's call to use home-spun clothing as a "spider mentality" and asserting that *swaraj* cannot be won by "twirling away with the hands." Gandhi responded yet again with two articles in *Young India*: 'The Poet and the Charkha (November 1925) and 'The Poet and the Wheel' (March 1926) (see *M&P* 54-62; 68-87; 99-121). The debate continued well into the 30s and 40s, with Tagore actually declining to write a piece on Gandhi following a request from the journal *Asia* as late as 1937 (*SL* 489). Later, Tagore wrote and published 'Gandhi the Man' in 1938 (*SL* 538-540).

For Tagore, Gandhi's call to non-cooperation against the British government and the notion of *swaraj* were thoroughly impractical and dangerously linked to a violent assertion of exclusivity. He writes to Andrews,

> What is *swaraj*! It is *maya* [illusion]. However we may delude ourselves with the phrases learnt from the West, *Swaraj* is not our objective.
>
> Our fight is a spiritual fight, it is for Man. We are to emancipate Man from the meshes that he himself has woven round him – these organizations of National Egoism. […] We have no word for Nation in our language. When we borrow this word from other people, it never fits us (*M&P* 55).[218]

[218] Tagore adds, "The freedom of unrestrained egoism in the individual is licence and not true freedom. For truth is in that which is universal in him. Individual human races also attain true freedom when they have the freedom of perfect revelation of Man and not that of their aggressive racial egoism. […] Our revolution in India will be a true one when its forces will be directed against this crude idea of liberty" (*M&P* 60).

It is evident from the above passage that the concept of *swaraj* or 'home/self' (*swa*) and 'rule' (*raj*) was unacceptable to Tagore. He found it constrictive as a political concept being borrowed from the 'West' and illegitimately imposed on a multi-cultural, pluralized geographical space or "receptacle" (See, *Nationalism*). India, Tagore explains in his letter to Andrews, is "an idea and not a mere geographical fact" thus irreconcilable with Western notions of the Nation as a spatial, geographical, racial construct (*M&P* 61). Worse still, as an ideological construct Tagore found nationalism opposed to ideals of universal humanism. He qualifies this when he writes to Andrews, "I believe in the true meeting of East and the West. Love is the ultimate truth of soul. We should do all we can, not to outrage the truth, to carry its banner against all opposition. The idea of non-cooperation unnecessarily hurts that truth" (ibid. 59).

Tagore, one must note, was no stranger to the politics of boycotting and non-cooperation. Fifteen years before Gandhi and during the 'Partition of Bengal' crisis in 1905, he had witnessed the *Swadeshi* [home-grown] movement in Bengal and the flirting of the nationalist leaders with principles of boycotting. After an initial but brief spell of involvement in the movement Tagore retracted himself from it and recounting those experiences to Andrews in context of Gandhian non-cooperation, he says, "[…] anarchy of a mere emptiness never tempts me, even when it is resorted to as a temporary measure. I am frightened of an abstraction which is ready to ignore living reality" (ibid. 58).[219]

[219] Tagore's most stringent critique of the *Swadeshi* movement and its leaders are to be found in his 1916 novel, *Ghare-Baire* [The Home and the World]. Sandeep, the charismatic *Swadeshi* leader, is not only represented as an opportunist but also as a hypocrite and adulterer. Nikhilesh, the local zamindar, by contrast, understands the "emptiness" of the *swadeshi* agitation. He draws Sandeep's attention to a number of problems in the *swadeshi* discourse – about boycotting cheaper Manchester clothes in favor of expensive hand-spun clothes and the resultant impoverishment of the Muslim weaver class. Some critics (like George Lukács) believe the novel critiques Gandhi through the figure of Sandeep. But that is most unlikely since Gandhi was not a prominent figure in Indian politics at the time of the novel's publication or for that matter when Tagore was writing it. Tagore first met Gandhi in 1914-15, when the latter was still in South Africa and visited Tagore's school at Shantiniketan with the students of Phoenix School. Earlier still, records indicate, Tagore had heard of Gandhi from his elder brother Jyotirindranath, after the latter met Gandhi at the 1901 Congress session at Calcutta. Soon after, a translation of an article by Gandhi

In this context, it is most interesting to see the way Tagore deconstructs Gandhian discourses of nationalism and non-cooperation as a non-violent active movement, first, in his letters to Andrews, and, then, in two essays, 'The Call of Truth' and 'The Cult of the *Charkha*.' (*M&P* 68-87; 99-112). In complete contrast to dominant views about Gandhi's commitment to non-violence, Tagore lays bare the repressed ideological core of non-cooperation as self-defeating and *violent*. "The idea of non-cooperation," the poet asserts, "has at its back *a fierce joy of annihilation* which at best is asceticism, and at its worst is that orgy of frightfulness in which the human nature, losing faith in the basic reality of normal life, finds *a disinterested delight in an unmeaning devastation* as has been shown in the late war […]" (ibid. 57-58) [emphasis mine]. For Tagore, Gandhi's non-cooperation movement, notwithstanding the latter's call for a non-violent active confrontation, was inherently sadistic and violent. "No, in its passive moral form is asceticism and in its active moral form is violence" (ibid.). In a letter written to Sturge Moore around the same time as his letters to Andrews he characterized the non-cooperation movement as "political fanaticism;" responsible for "blinding our vision, blurring our perspective of humanity [and] wearing me out." The ideology of non-cooperation, Tagore wrote, is "alien to my own realm of truth" (*SL* 281-282). Instead of non-cooperation, Tagore idealized "harmony and cooperation between different peoples" as most crucial for India and the world (*M&P* 60).

It is not surprising, then, that for Tagore Gandhi's movement was reactionary and destined to failure. Non-cooperation was incapable of resolving the problems besetting the modern world – "The West has misunderstood the East which is at the root of the disharmony

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on Indian settlers in South Africa was published in the journal *Bharati,* which was edited by the Tagores. However, it is still unlikely that Gandhi as a nationalist made any mark on Tagore before 1917-18 when Gandhi actively started work with the Champaran peasants, Allahabad mill-workers, and at the Khaira agitation (See, *M&P* 1-3; 5). For Lukács, see 'Tagore's Gandhi Novel.' For a brief but to the point critique of Lukács's article see Nandy *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*.

that prevails between them, but will it mend the matter if the East in her turn tries to misunderstand the West?" (ibid. 62). Tagore opposed nationalism because he felt it was founded on exclusive principles drawn from possessive appreciation of one's own culture, society, and religion. Nationalism professed separation between peoples.

To Gandhi, Tagore's criticisms and concerns were invaluable but unfounded: nothing more than unwarranted anxieties over *swaraj* and non-cooperation as "doctrine[s] of separation, exclusiveness, narrowness, and negation" (ibid. 65). Instead, Gandhi explains, "Non-cooperation is intended to pave the way to real, honourable and voluntary co-operation based on mutual respect and trust." "The present struggle," he asserts, "is being waged against compulsory co-operation, against one-sided combination, against the armed imposition of modern methods of exploitation, masquerading under the name of civilisation" (*M&P* 65-66). He accepted the poet's argument that the movement was prone to producing unwarranted bigotry, but insisted that his followers were not misguided. In 'The Great Sentinel,' he says, "I regard the poet as a sentinel warning us against the approaching enemies called Bigotry, Lethargy, Intolerance, Ignorance, Inertia and other members of that brood," but assures that there is no such danger in the near future. The "attainment of swaraj," he reminds, is "possible only by the revival of the spinning wheel." In conclusion, he states, "if India is ever to attain the *swaraj* of the Poet's dream, she will do so only by Non-violent Non-cooperation" (ibid. 67-68). Perhaps just one line from Tagore's 'Striving for Swaraj' is enough to show that in spite of Gandhi's most heart-rending claims, the poet was far from convinced: "Those who [are] enthusiastic over the prospect of a *faqir* turning a copper coin into a gold *mohur*, are able to do so, not because they are lacking in intellect, but because their avidity restrains them from exercising their intelligence" (ibid. 113-114).

It is important to note that Gandhi's explanations suffer from two critical lacunae. First, he completely circumvents the problematic raised by Tagore regarding the inherently violent disposition of the Non-cooperation movement, insisting instead, not once but twice in his essay 'The Poet's Anxiety,' that the movement is entirely non-violent (*M&P* 65; 68). Second, As Zizek notes, Gandhian non-violence as a doctrine of action could work only in a situation where the Other is moral and willing to engage in a dialogue with the colonized. In other words, Gandhi's movement professes faith in the colonizer, his conscience, understanding, and responsible direction of power. But, as Zizek explains, the "ultimate limitation of Gandhi's strategy [is] that it only works against a liberal-democratic regime which refers to certain minimal ethico-political standards, i.e., in which, to put it in pathetic terms, those in power still 'have conscience'" (Zizek *Universal* 222-223). Zizek reminds us of Gandhi's reply in the late 1930s to the question of what the Jews in Germany should do against Hitler. Gandhi had said: "they should commit a collective suicide and thus arouse the conscience of the world." But, as Zizek notes, in case of such an event the "Nazi reaction to it would have been: OK, we will help you, where do you want the poison to be delivered to you?" (ibid.)

Zizek's analysis of the functional limit of the Gandhian model, that is, it can function only within a liberal-democratic set-up, is interesting but half the story. For, I have serious objections in accepting that colonization, whoever may be the occupying power, can ever be deemed as liberal-democratic or any different from Nazism. Of course, the British exclusively advertised 'their' colonial ventures as both 'liberal' and 'democratic,' unlike say that of the French in South-East Asia or Belgians in Congo, but their regime, exceedingly after the 1857 Mutiny, turned more repressive and racialized (See, Brantlinger). In this scenario, the Gandhian position does more than 'exploit' British claims about being a liberal colonial power. Gandhi's

non-violent pose, in fact, complements British claims. Gandhian non-violence should not to be judged as a limitation. It is an ideological tool functioning to re-present the colonizer as possessed of 'conscience.' It veils the grotesque inhumanity of the colonizer and colonialism, protecting both against the growth and danger of widespread urban militant and subaltern anti-colonial movements. More significantly, it is the ideological tool necessary for ensuring the continuation of colonial-capitalism following the withdrawal of territorial imperial powers from colonial states. Non-violence as an anti-colonial method is, as Tagore explained it, delusional. Unlike Gandhi, Tagore was categorical about the ethics of engaging the colonial regime: do "not claim sympathy or kind treatment with too great an insistence and intensity" from the colonizer (*SL* 221).

It is not possible to give in detail the entire trajectory or contents of this debate between Gandhi and Tagore. But the debate gives us critical perspective on Tagore's thinking about Nationalism, anti-colonial resistance, and, above all, history. Tagore, it can be easily attested, believed in universal humanism and was opposed to any and all forms of imaginary idealisms – nationalist, religious, or racial – which constricted the ability of an individual and the 'nation' to think openly, i.e., without exclusivist prejudice. He envisioned critical modernity as a highly nuanced subjective and collective position that transcended the usual tradition-progressive binary to embrace an identity that was neither strictly Western nor specifically Eastern.[220] His historicization of this argument in essays such as *Nationalism* and *Kalantar* ['The Passage of Time'] points towards his thinking about history and Indian history.[221] The central ideas and arguments in the debate are especially useful in forming an idea about the poet's understanding

[220] See, Tagore, *Nationalism*. Also, Majumdar, ভারতে জাতিয়াতা ও আন্তরজাতিকাতা এবং রবীন্দ্রানাথ, [Indian Nationalism and Internationalism and Rabindranath Tagore]; Mukherjee, *Rabindranath Tagore's Concept of State, Nation and Nationalism*.

[221] For a detailed discussion of history in Tagorean thinking, see Bagchi, রবীন্দ্রচিন্তায় ও সৃস্টিতে ইতিহাস, [History in the Thought and Writings of Tagore].

and representations of the Mutiny. Equally important, of course, is the issue of poet's ideological development between his 1877 publication, the essay on the queen of Jhansi, published in the journal *Bharati*, and his two later pieces, দুরাশা [Durasha] and *Gora*.

Wasted Energies: Tagore and the Mutiny I

The exact date of composition for the essay "Jhansir Rani" is not known but its publication in *Bharati* in 1877 coincides with the early phase of Hindu Nationalism in Bengal. Gopal Haldar is right when he says that a young Tagore was deeply influenced by the rising tide of Nationalism in the 70s (Haldar 'Bengali' 268-69). Tagore's avid participation in the ninth (1875) and eleventh edition of the Hindu-Mela (February 1877) is also recorded.[222] On occasion of the ninth Hindu-Mela, Tagore wrote a poem titled হিন্দুমেলায় উপহার or 'Gift on the occasion of Hindu-Mela.' Two years later, at the eleventh edition of the gathering, a young Rabindranath attended the Mela for presenting on stage a song and poem he had recently composed. Unfortunately, a clash between the police and organizers jeopardized his plan and he had to settle for a much humbler stage – he recited his poem and sang his song to a small audience standing under a tree. The song was an ode to 'Mother-India' while the poem had as its theme the recently concluded 'Delhi-Durbar.' The poem was never published, possibly due to the enactment of the Vernacular Press Act (1878). In an interview with Sajanikanta Das in 1939, Tagore recounts that this poem on the 'grand fantasy' of Lytton [i.e. the Delhi Durbar] was tactfully made to disappear after well-wishers cautioned against its publication. Manuscript versions of the poem, Tagore told Das, however continued to circulate amongst friends (qtd. in Pal vol.1 300). Das

[222] See, Pal, রবি জীবনী [Rabi-Jivani/The Life of Rabi], vol.1, 290-302; and, Bandopadhyay, রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্যের আদিপর্ব [Rabindrasahityer Adiparbo/Early Years of Rabindranth's Writings], 18.

later 'discovered' parts of the poem in Jyotirindranath Tagore's play স্বপ্নময়ী [Swapnamoyee/Dream-like] published in 1882.[223]

There is a chance that Tagore wrote quite a few poems to commemorate the Hindu-Mela celebrations. Recently one such poem, হোক ভারতের জয় [Hok Bharater Joy/Let the Victory be India's] has been found.[224] The songs and poems composed on occassion of the Hindu-Mela in 1875 and 1877, and those generally written between 1874 and 1877, belong to the Hindu Nationalist phase of adoloscent Tagore. These poems, including ভারত ভুমি [Bharat Bhumi/Land of Bharat] (published in *Bangadarshan* in 1874), হিন্দুমেলায় উপহার [Hindu-Melay Upahar/Gift on the occassion of Hindu-Mela] (1875), and হোক ভারতের জয় [Hok Bharater Joy/Let the Victory be India's] (published in *Bandhav* in 1875), as Sanghamita Bandopadhyay notes, were all written under the influence of the nationalist spirit and Jyotirindranath's secret organization, 'Sanjivani Sabha' (Bandopadhyay *Rabindrasahityer*130-131).[225] These and sundry other compositions, all of which Tagore in later life would qualify as 'copy-book' compositions, reveal Tagore's strong nationalist feelings during the period – these compositions regret the lost ancient past of India, presents its contemporary deadly pallor, and calls out to the masses to rescue Mother-India from her abject decay.[226]

The queen of Jhansi essay is infused with similar strains of thought and constitutes Tagore's first attempt at engaging with the proto-nationalist moment of the Mutiny. Though part of Tagorean juvenilia, and most possibly originally written by Tagore as part of his home-

[223] Parts of this poem have been recovered by Nepal Majumdar. See, vol.1 17-18.
[224] Bandopadhyay, রবীন্দ্রসাহিত্যের আদিপর্ব [Rabindrasahityer Adiparbo/Early Years of Rabindranth's Writings], 18; 127-128. For the full text of this poem see, Appendix 57-60. For the full text of 'Bharat Bhumi,' see, Appendix 51-55.
[225] Also, Pal 320-321. The 'Sanjivani Sabha' was founded sometime around 1876-1877. Literally translated as 'Rejuvination Organization,' this secret gathering was inspired by Mazzini's Young Italy, though its agenda was the revitalization of Indian culture through intellectual discussions.
[226] See for instance his poems like দেশের উন্নতি ['The Upliftement of the Nation] (1888), ভারতলক্ষমী ['India-the Bountiful'] (1896) etc. These were written under the inspiration of Bankim's essays, especially বাঙ্গালির বাহুবল [The Physical Prowess of the Bengali]. For a discussion see, Bandopadhyay *Rabindrasahityer* 217-221.

schooling assignment, the essay is a summary of events surrounding the life of Lakshmi Bie as gathered from British historiographies. This is evidenced by the more than interesting ending of the essay –

> This is but all we know about the queen's life from British histories. The history of her life that we have gathered we hope to publish it sometime in the future ("Jhansir Rani" *RR* 322).

The question of history is central to this essay. And as the final lines amply exhibit, Tagore conceives the essay as a site for registering his unhappiness with British historical accounts of the queen's life and the Mutiny more generally. And he says so in no uncertain terms when he writes:

> It is a sore and unfortunate point for India that we have to refer to British narratives for learning about the lives of these brave men who fought in the Mutiny [...] In history written by the foreigners, their lives [1857 martyrs] find cursory mention at the margins, eventually these will be lost by the ravages of time and our future generations will never get to know their names (ibid. 317-318).

Here Tagore reminds one of Bankim's famous regret: "Bengal has no history! We must write our own history." This similarity is hardly surprising given Tagore found Bankim profoundly inspirational.[227] And though Tagore's views on anti-colonial resistance changed in later years his historical consciousness did not change as much. For in his 'Nationalism in India,' written during his lecture tour of the United States in 1916, the poet says: "Europe has her past. Europe's strength therefore lies in her history. We, in India, must make up our minds that we cannot

[227] See Tagore's essay on Bankim (1895) in *RRWB*, vol. 13 891-899. See, especially Tagore's views on Bankim's retrieval of History (896-97). For a discussion on the impact of Bankim on Tagore and the historical consciousness of the general milieu during Tagore's foundational years, see Bandopadhyay *Rabindrasahityer* 68-71; Bagchi *History* 27-31.

borrow other people's history, and that if we stifle our own, we are committing suicide" (Tagore *Nationalism* 128). Undubitably then, the "Jhansir Rani" essay was written not simply with the goal of culling from various British sources a picture of Lakshmi Bie's life, but also to articulate and remind the readers that a history of the Mutiny and its martyrs were yet to be written.

Allied to this demand for history in the essay we find a desire to retrieve a lost Hindu-Aryan past. Like Bankim and other established writers of the period, the young Tagore found the Mutiny rekindling masculine *virjya* or valor [বীর্য]; a characteristic feature, according to most late-nineteenth century national bourgeois writers, of ancient Hindu-Aryan past. Tagore begins the essay thus:

> We had thought that following years of subjection under foreign rule the Rajputs had lost their valor and the Marathas forgotten their martial skills and forsaken their patriotic spirit. But in the storm of the Mutiny we saw many a courageous men, inflamed with passion and excitement, fighting for their demands in diverse regions of India ("Jhansir Rani" *RR* 317).

Commending the rebel leaders such as Tantia Tope and Kunwar Singh as "brave fighters," Tagore writes, "though we cannot pride ourselves on their glories and acts, nevertheless we cannot but commend their bravado [*virjya*], their passion, and their enthusiasm" (ibid.). He reminds his readers of the sacrifices made by these brave Rajputs and the bravery of the Maratha queen who fought to retain her dignity (319). And though many of these 'men' spent their energies and valor unnecessarily [*ayatha* or অযথা] during the Mutiny, he keeps praising their valor nonetheless (ibid. 317).[228]

[228] The Bengali word *virjya*, derived from the Sanskrit word *virjya*, mean the same in both languages: valor. The Bengali word *veer* [বীর] meaning courageous is derived from the Sanskrit. *Virjya*, in Sanskrit and Bengali, also mean semen, and by extension applies only to men and for designating masculinity and masculine virility. For an interesting discussion of the word and its use in nineteenth century Bengali culture, see, Chaudhuri, *Frail Hero*.

Overall, Tagore's sentiments regarding the Mutiny in 1877 were similar to the then current ideas about the Uprising – the Uprising was the most recent echo of Hindu-Aryan martiality and masculinity (not a single Muslim martyr is referenced in the essay). And though it was a failure, because energies were misdirected and thus wasted, the call extended by the young poet in his poems written for the Hindu-Mela to the Indian masses to rise and reclaim lost honor can easily be situated in context of his reading of the Mutiny as a significant historical event illustrative of the still burning embers of Hindu martiality.

Flayed Imaginaries: Tagore and the Mutiny II

In the short story "Durasha," written twenty-one years after, we find a very different authorial sentiment at work. Written in the first person, the story begins in the hill station of Darjeeling about thirty years after 1857, coinciding again therefore with the rising tide of Hindu nationalism in Bengal. The narrator, an English-educated *bhadralok*, meets a *sanyasini* [Hindu female mendicant] on the main thoroughfare, Calcutta Road, on a misty wet morning. Finding her alone and crying, the *babu*, dressed to the hilt in a Macintosh and boots and carrying a walking stick after the manner of the English, inquires after her. She introduces herself as the daughter of the Nawab of Bhadraon. Though initially disappointed in being addressed as '*babuji*' (বাবুজি) and not the usual '*babusahib*' (বাবুসাহেব), the latter being a more anglicized hence preferred mode of addressal for the western educated Macaulay's minute-men, the narrator found himself drawn by an inexorable curiosity to know about the Muslim woman dressed as a Hindu mendicant. Constrained by his inability to converse in chaste Hindi, the narrator decides to listen to her story without interrupting her over what he calls philosophical questions about free-will and divine destiny (26).[229] This aside sets up the narrator's position as distinct from the

[229] Rabindranath Tagore "Durasha" (1898). Published in *Bharati*. I use the text reprinted in Chakraborty edited মহাবিদ্রহের গল্পসংকলন [An Anthology of Short Stories on the Mutiny], 24-33.

sanyasin's establishing his intellectual superiority and modernity. The narrator enters into a dialogue from the safety of this imaginary identity. This particular aspect will be critical later in the story.

The *sanyasin* tells him that her family was related to the royal Mughal household, which made it difficult for her father to find a suitable groom for her. She however had found her love – Kishorilal the commanding officer of the Nawab's troops, a Hindu Brahmin. She, then just sixteen, had never stepped outside the zenana (Oñtohpur/অন্তঃপুর), but would always watch in awe Kishorilal perform his daily religious rituals and ablutions on the banks of Jamuna every morning. Untutored in and ignorant of her own religion, she glimpsed in Kishorilal's daily rituals the unprecedented purity of godliness. She discovered in Kishorilal the true meaning of the word Brahmin – a completeness and purity that surfaces in mortals only through their ability to reach and touch the wholesomeness of the *Brahman* or the central spirit of the universe. Having dedicated herself to this spirit, Kishorilal, she endeavored to know from her Hindu attendant as much about Hindu myths and religion as possible. At around this time the Mutiny sparked off in various places. The troops of Badraon mutinied but the loyalist Nawab informed the British who stormed the Badraon castle to rid it off mutineers. In the battle, the unprepared troops led by Kishorilal were decimated. Having watched the battle from her window, she left the safety of her zenana at night in search of Kishorilal, whom she discovered lying in the battle-field. Taking him for dead, she satisfied her long cherished desire to touch and kiss the feet of this pure soul. But Kishorilal was only wounded. He begged for water which she got from the nearby Jamuna and dressed his wounds with cloth torn from her royal dress. Kishorilal asked who his benefactor was and she replied: "Presently your devoted servant, I am the daughter of the Nawab." Hearing this Kishorilal let out a roar and violently pushed her back saying: "Daughter of a traitor, infidel!

You have polluted me with your touch and water" (29). Then, he staggered away to the riverbank and finding a boat sailed away, alone, into the distant horizon.

Alone and rejected, she decided to devote her life in trying to become a *real* Hindu and left her home that night. She found shelter as a disciple with a Hindu guru at Benares. There she regularly received news about the Mutiny and Kishorilal, who had joined forces with Tantia Tope. But after the Mutiny and British victory all news about her beloved dried up. Convinced that he, the *Brahmin*, cannot be dead, for that which is 'not this, not that' (*neti*, *neti*) cannot be dead, she took the disguise of a *bhairavi* (ascetic Hindu mendicant of the Shaivaite order) and set off in search of her man (31).[230] Thirty years passed and she transformed herself into a Brahmin in her heart and soul, travelling all across the subcontinent in search of her Brahmin. All through she held onto one single image: of Kishorilal rowing away silently, alone, without companions or disciples, into the distance, a pure self-engrossed figure of the *purusha* [Man or the One], who needs no one or nothing to fulfill his being, watched over only by the heavenly bodies above (32).[231] Her search brings her to the Himalayas, the land of the Bhutiyas and Lepchas, non-Hindus and *mlecchas* with very different cultures, habits, and customs. A Brahmin in her heart and soul she struggled to survive in this country but her desire to find Kishorilal sustained her through all religious challenges. After much trial and tribulation, through all of which she successfully preserved her religious beliefs, she found Kishorilal after thirty-eight years in a

[230] She says: "Those who knew his name said he must have either died in battle or was hanged by the British. But my soul refused to believe that. It said that is not possible. Kishorilal cannot die, he is beyond death. He is a Brahmin, the spirit cannot be doused nor evaporated through nirvana. He is still awaiting me to reach him and sacrifice myself at his feet. He is in deep penance, burning aright on an altar somewhere in some distant region" (31).

[231] Here again, the idea of the Brahman, the wholesome complete spirit is presented. The word *purusha* can mean both Man and male or alternatively *the* Man or *Cosmic* Man, He who pervades the Universe or the Brahman. *Purusha* is also the primeval Man who was sacrificed to bring about the Universe. See, for example 'Purusa Sukta' in the *Rg Veda*; 'Purusamedha' in *Yajur Veda*. The notion of the indestructible Purusha or Brahman is also present in amuch diluted form in the *Gita* as the *Atman* or soul that cannot be destroyed, burned, buried, etc. as opposed to the physical body which can decay and disintegrate. The possible influence of the Sankhya School in apparent where the Purusha is Pure or Absolute Consciousness and thus opposite of the material or Prakrit, which contains organic structures like the body.

remote village in Darjeeling – married to a Bhutiya woman and father to her children and grandchildren. She ends her story with these words:

> What delusion (Moha/মোহ) has been driving me all this long! Did I ever realize the Brahmin who had stolen my sixteen-year old heart was only a practice (Abhyas/অভ্যাস), mere custom (Sanskar/সংস্কার). I knew that was religion (*Dharma/*ধর্ম), eternal and unending. Why did I accept the blow I received from him that night as a mark of my baptism (গুরুহস্তের দীক্ষা)? Brahmin, you left one practice for another, but how shall I regain the youth I sacrificed on you? (32-33).

Thus ending her story, she left bidding the narrator good-bye:

> Having finished her story, the lady stood up to leave, and said: 'Namaskar Babuji!' Then as if correcting herself, she said: "Selam Babusahib!" With this farewell in the strict manner of Muslims, she, it appeared, also bid her final farewell to the Brahmin and disappeared in the mist enshrouded grey mountains (33).

It is not difficult to see Tagore's humanist philosophy at work in this story. For Tagore attempts to convey one single point; a point he variously broaches throughout his life in many places including his debate with Gandhi and his lectures on Nationalism. The point itself can be divided in two parts and surmised as follows:

1) "Love is the ultimate truth of soul. We should do all we can not to outrage that truth [...]"(*M&P* 59).
2) "Let our [human] civilization take its firm stand upon its basis of social cooperation and not upon" ideas that produce and trap us within mechanistic organizations and constructs, like Nation or Religion or Race (*Nationalism* 153; 131-132).

Central to Tagore's vision of humanity is an ideology that stands opposed to all forms of restrictive and disabling discourses, beliefs, and thinking. Tagore is critical of puerile ideas that situate humanity in "convenient compartments for" the "preservation" and perpetuation of imaginary ideals of difference (*Nationalism* 45-46).

In the story, anguish surfaces due to such puerile imaginations about religion and caste, on the one hand, and class and culture, on the other.[232] The epiphanic moment in the story hinges on the problematic of the imaginary in the Lacanian sense. First, the girl identifies and attaches herself with an imaginary idea of the Brahmin, failing to realize that for Kishorilal the daily pursuit of rituals though performed with utmost conviction has only a symbolic significance. He pursues a customary practice of religion since it offers him a distinct symbolic identity, that of the pious Brahmin. These practices alone, Tagore seems to suggest, do not make a *real* Brahmin. Practice or custom does not necessarily make the adherent a *Brahman*. The fact that Kishorilal was not attached to his daily beliefs in any way other than for symbolic purposes is clear from his later life transformation – for him preservation of his life was more *real* than his religious beliefs and for which he did not have any qualms in marrying a non-Hindu *mleccha*.

The girl's imaginary fascination with Kishorilal and/or the idea of *Brahman* she associated with him is beautifully brought out by Tagore in the sequence where she describes how after hearing legends of Hinduism from her servant she would recreate a fantastic "Hindu world" within her otherwise isolated zenana:

[232] The title "Durasha" is best translated as "false hope" and not "hopelessness" since the former more appropriately expresses the thematic of the story. William Radice uses "false hope" as the title of the story in his translation. See, Radice. In the manuscript, however, the story had two other titles – 'A Hill Story' [পাহারী গল্প] and কুহেলিকা [literally translated, 'A Call of the Apparition']. See, Pal, *Rabi-Jivani*, vol. 4, 127. One can speculate that the 'apparition' in the title 'A Call of the Apparition' applies both to the woman in the story who vanishes into the mountain mist leaving the narrator pondering if he at all had that experience as well as to the Mutiny. The Mutiny it can be argued exerts a spectral presence haunting the 'story' into existence.

> I would hear about the myths and rituals of Hinduism from my maid – the fantastic tales of their gods and goddesses, the stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata; and hearing these I would then in my imagination lift curtains from over a beautiful scene of this Hindu world while sitting desolate in one corner of my inner chamber. Idols, ringing of bells, sounding of conch shells, gold-capped temples, the smells and sounds, the magical mystic powers of the ascetic, the Brahmin's spiritual grandeur, mysterious actions undertaken by Gods in disguise of mortals, would all come together as in a rainbow and create an immensely beautiful and profoundly supernatural fantasy world around me. And I would float freely in that world like a little bird far away from its nest (27).

This magnificent descriptive passage replete with all the stereotypes about Hinduism and the Hindu-world finds parallel with another passage that scholars have noted as echoing an Orientalist imaginary – the English educated narrator's description of the Muslim world. The narrator on hearing the *sanyasini's* polished Hindi articulation says:

> I have never heard such chaste Hindi being spoken by a woman. I understood immediately this is the language of the Amirs [Mughals]. […] Her language transferred me from the British hill town of Darjeeling to a different world. In front of my eyes surfaced the Mughal cities like as in a fantasy – the marble memorials, the caparisoned horses, the golden *howdas* atop elephants, multicolored head-gears and muslin clothing's, arabesques mounted on belts, gold filigreed shoes – extended hours of leisure, flowing dresses, and widespread decorum (26).

Shubomay Mandal connects this passage to other such descriptions of Mughal cities found in European Orientalist writings (Mandal 'Introduction'). But this passage can also be compared to the description of the 'Hindu world' given by the Nawab's daughter. Both

descriptions are imaginary and far distant from the complex lived realities of either universe. I believe Tagore presents these descriptive passages deliberately to accentuate the respective imaginaries of the English educated *babu* and the Nawab's daughter as false. It is another way for the poet to convey his point regarding the compartmentalization of life within childish imaginations. The imaginary continues through the *sanyasini's* desire to be a true Brahmin and the force of this imaginary is broken only at the end when she 'returns' to her reality bidding farewell to her (imaginary) desire. Similarly, the Bengali narrator, who was offended at being called 'babuji,' is left at the end unsure whether what transpired was real or a figment of his imagination. His western education and rational mind is challenged. Throughout the course of her tale, he is unable to decide how to make sense of Kishorilal's actions, since the *sanyasini* refused to either term him an animal for his rejection of her or as a God for his life devoted to the pursuit of freedom. What nonetheless succeeds in leaving its mark on the readers is the role of religion and allied discourses of exclusivity and pollution.

Evidently, issues like valor and history that we find in Tagore's essay on the queen of Jhansi are substituted in this story by a profound psychological drama about human relations that unfolds in context of the rebellion and in relation to the question of faith. Having said that, it is also not possible to conclusively segregate Tagore's representation of the Mutiny from either the libidinal drama which is at the heart of the story or the explorations of faith and religious belief that is extended through the narrative. In fact the Mutiny as a backdrop to this psycho-social religious drama functions to signal towards Tagore's meta-critical hypothesis about the character of the `emeute. That is to say, the story can be read as containing a critical gesture – the tragedy of the libidinal drama, the Hindu sepoy's refusal to accept the Muslim girl because she does not share his religion and her realization at the end of the frailty of religious beliefs, signify Tagore's

opinion regarding the nature of the Mutiny and the rebels. Religion that is shown as erecting a barrier between individuals and is eventually revealed as dissociated from all forms of idealism engineer a meta-narrative for judging the failure of the Mutiny. Religion, it can be inferred from the above argument, was responsible for scuttling the revolutionary fervor, separating individuals and misdirecting causes, jeopardizing in the process any possibility of a united movement. Resistance against racial and colonial injustices falter at the instance of an equally unnerving regime of exclusivity informing rebel vision. Instead of unitying out of love, the rebels, one may interpret the story as implying, fall apart due to their inability to reconcile with each other over the issue of religion. The rebels, in spite of their bravery, wasted their energies unnecessarily or *ayatha*.

I spent time on this short story not merely because it is the only story written by Tagore that is explicity woven around the Indian Mutiny, but also because it contains what I believe to be central to Tagore's thought, that is, the question of how to transcend meager imaginary 'idolatraies' of life. We can see resonances of this thinking in most of his novels including *Gora* (1910) which I discuss next.

Desire and the Other: Tagore and the Mutiny III

Psychoanalytically thinking, Tagore's novels can be said to be preoccupied with two primary issues: 1) ethics of human action, and, 2) (feminine) sexuality. While novels like গোরা [*Gora*] (1910), ঘরে বাইরে [*Ghare-Baire*] (1915), and চার অধ্যায় [*Char Adhyay*] (1934) deal directly with the first, and specifically the relation of ethical human action within the political field, novels like চোখের বালি [*Chokher Bali*] (1906) and চতুরঙ্গ [*Chaturanga*] (1916) deal with the latter. (The first three novels contain equally interesting vectors for exploring Tagore's explorations of (feminine) sexuality). In *Gora*, *Ghare-Baire*, and *Char Adhyay* the single most important

question is that of ethical human action in face of overbearing symbolic mandates and imaginary ideals produced as a result of these mandates – religio-cultural and political in *Gora*, politico-sexual in *Ghare-Baire*, and organizational in *Char Adhyay*.[233] It is not a stretch to suggest that for Tagore the solution to the problem of ethical action within the field of dominant ideology lay in successful traversing of the imaginary that restricts individual vision regarding what is Truth and what is not. In the case of Gora, the Truth that Tagore meticulously leads Gora into understanding is the Truth of universal humanism, or at least inclusive nationalism and unprejudiced appreciation of humanity as a whole. This problematic in *Gora* finds a more complicated overture through the reality of or Truth about Gora's identity – a conservative Hindu nationalist who is in reality Irish by blood.

Written between 1907 and 1910 and published as a book in 1910, the novel is set in the 1880s. It narrates the story of Gourmohan or Gora, an Irish orphan, who grows up in a Bengali Brahmin family after his parents die in the Mutiny at Etawah. Gora, unaware of his true racial identity, grows up into a 'conservative' Hindu nationalist dismissive of anything faintly different from *his* interpretation of the Hindu scriptures. The novel is one of the best documents available in any Indian language that studies and critiques Hindu nationalism as an ideology and the psychology governing its followers through a profoundly interesting subtext of ethnic origin.

A copious amount of critical material is available on *Gora* in both English and Bengali. I cannot take all of these into consideration nor can I enter into a detailed reading of the novel lacking both scope and space here. Instead, I will read the novel in relation to contexts I have already adumbrated thus far, specifically, Tagore's engagement with the Mutiny vis-à-vis his

[233] Ashis Nandy in his study of these three novels suggests that "Tagore's political concerns in the three novels were roughly the same; they did not change over the twenty-five years of his life that the writing of the three novels spanned." Describing the primary concerns in the novels he says, the "political-psychological in *Gora* becomes predominantly political-sociological in *Ghare-Baire* and political-ethical in *Char Adhyay*." See Nandy "Illegitimacy"10.

arguments against religion and religio-nationalism as disruptive of truth and productive of fantastic desires and imaginary discourses. In keeping with my theoretical orientation my analysis will focus on two psychoanalytically mature interpretations of the novel, first, Ashis Nandy's *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism: Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of Self* (1994) and, second, Santanu Biswas's work-in-progress that explores Tagore's novels from a Freudian-Lacanian perspective.[234] It has to be noted though that both Nandy and Biswas overlook critical aspects of the novel in their readings. Nandy focuses more on the sociological aspects through a theoretical approach that is more '(neo)-Freudian sociology' than Freudian psychoanalysis, compromising verily on the question of desire in the novel, while Biswas in adhering strictly to a Freudian-Lacanian interpretation foregoes completely the sociological or political context of the novelistic universe. My reading, though drawing heavily from both, will attempt to tread a middle path. I will focus on unraveling the question of desire in the novel in relation to the colonial situation, especially the Mutiny.

This relation can be further accentuated by highlighting a problematic in the novel which though noted from time to time by critics has never been adequately investigated. Tagore writes the novel in 1907 and describes a certain political culture and social psychology that surfaced in Bengal at the turn of the century and most identifiably after 1905. However, the novelistic universe is set in the late 1870s or early 1880s when such psychologies were still in a highly embryonic stage. In other words, the kind of religious nationalism that Gora espouses and

[234] Biswas has published two articles from his ongoing research. 'Rabindranath Tagore and Freudian Thought' was published in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* and reprinted in Salman Akhtar edited *Freud Along the Ganges*. His essay on *Gora*, 'A Lacanian Interpretation of Desire in Rabindranath Tagore's *Gora*,' was published in Harish Narang edited *Semiotics of Language, Literature, and Cinema*. A more recent and revised version of the paper is titled 'The Question of the Structuring of Desire in Rabindranath Tagore's *Gora*.' This version under the title '*Gora* After Lacan,' was delivered as a conference presentation at Deakin University at Melbourne in November 2005 as part of their Master's Seminar on Psychoanalysis. I use both version since the latter, though more recent, the author cautions me is a truncated version since it was originally written for a conference. Personal correspondence, 28 May 2009.

vocalizes through the major part of the novel was not present within the cultural spectrum of Bengali society in the period the novel is set. Gora's brand of nationalism emphasizing the exclusivity of Hinduism and practicality of a Hindu-nation emerged gradually through, first, intrinsic 'nativism' of Bankim's *Anandamath*, published in 1882, and then through discourses of self-definition expounded by the likes of Vivekanada and Aurobindo at beginning of the twentieth century. Why then is the novel set in the 1880s and what is the reason behind identifying the Mutiny as the 'beginning'? Is it merely to legitimize the origin of Gora as an Irish orphan brought up in a Brahmin household? For a creative genius like Tagore, I am sure, a believable situation for explaining how an Irish orphan came to be adopted by a Brahmin family could not have been impossible to write say in context of the 1880s. Kipling did the same with his Kim without making the Mutiny the child-hero's origin. I believe Tagore chose the Mutiny for emphasizing the rebellion as the beginning or point of origin for the social psychology espoused by Gora. By associating Gora's problematic imaginary identity with the symbolic moment of the Rebellion, Tagore re-presents in *Gora* what he had initially suggested in his 1898 short-story – the `emeute is responsible for producing a diffident, self-defeating ideology of nationalism within the Bengali bourgeois; something we have already witnessed in the writings of Girish Ghosh and Upendra Mitra for example.

Gora was serially published in the Bengali monthly *Probasi* from March 1907 to March 1909. It tells the story of Gora, the name in Bengali meaning both 'white' and 'fair,' colloquially implying Caucasian. The rebels kill Gora's father in the Mutiny, while his mother escapes, finds refuge at the home of a Brahmin couple and dies that very night giving birth to a male child. The barren Bengali couple Anadamoyee and Krishnadayal decides to adopt Gora as their own without telling anyone about the child's identity. Gora grows up to be a staunch Hindu who

believes in the caste system and is driven by fierce ultra Hindu nationalistic feelings – he strongly argues the greatness of Hinduism, elaborates the duties of a true Hindu, condemns marriage outside the Hindu community, refuses to eat food cooked by Lachmia, Anandaloyee's Christian maid and his old nurse etc. The tragic irony lies in the fact that Gora is unconscious about his 'alien' origin.[235] The novel traces Gora's interaction with his friend Binoy and through him with the Brahmo family of Paresh Babu with whose daughter Sucharita Gora subsequently falls in love. While the lovers struggle to come to terms with each other, Suchorita with Gora's stubbornness about things Hindu and Gora with his own feelings towards Sucharita that he believes distracts him from his commitment to the national cause, the story reaches its critical dénouement as a dying Krishnadayal reveals to Gora the truth about his European identity. Following this, we witness a complete transformation of Gora from an exclusivist ultra Hindu nationalist to being an inclusivist nationalist for whom the entire nation becomes one. He becomes a disciple to the Brahmo Paresh Babu and in the epilogue tells his mother, whom he had rebuked earlier for not following the rules of Hindu customs: "Ma, you are my only mother. The mother for whom I have looked everywhere – all this time she was sitting in my house. You have no caste, you do not discriminate against people, you do not hate – you are the image of benediction. You are my Bharatvarsha [India]" (477).[236] This final announcement on the part of Gora is nothing short of a tectonic shift in his attitude and ideology. Earlier the same Gora refused to eat at his mother's room the food cooked by the Christian Lachmiya, reproached his

[235] It might help my non-Indian readers to know that Hinduism does not allow conversion. A person is either born Hindu or not. The issue of conversion that rattles the subcontinent today in the name of *suddhi* [purification], a process akin to baptism by which a non-Hindu or Hindu who may have converted to some other religion is reconverted to Hinduism is not something that can be found in any of the religious texts. It was introduced by Dayanad Saraswati in the late 19th century – *suddhi* or ritual purification has nothing to do with conversion or reconversion. It is more akin to 'confession' in Christianity. But Saraswati introduced this idea which has been since popular and lately found much support from the Hinduvta coterie. It has been used widely to reconvert tribals back from Christianity into Hinduism producing a most unnerving group: the *neo-Khatriyas*, who are more puritanically Hindu than anyone else. See, Jaffrelot 'Introduction;' and Ilaiah *Why*.

[236] I use Sujit Mukherjee's translation.

childhood friend Binoy for visiting a Brahmo household, and held in his heart an image of *his* mother-India far different from what Britisher's like Marshman illustrated in their Orientalist histories (21; 324). What Gora never realized, as Biswas points out, was how his concept of India or Bharatvarsha, described in terms of munificence and abundance, was uncannily similar to his mother Anandamoyee (Biswas [unpublished] 6). It is no surprise therefore that when in the epilogue Gora finally acknowledges his mother as Bharatvarsha, Biswas comments that Gora's traversal of his imaginary has finally succeeded. The abstract imaginary conception of Mother-India finds a corporeal presence and imagification through Anandamoyee and Gora is at last able to articulate his desire in concrete symbolic terms (ibid. 6-7).

Biswas's article focuses on Gora's problematic relationship with the father or paternal metaphor qua the desire of his mother, Anandomoyee. Biswas argues that Gora's transformation should be read as his successful traversing of Anandomeyee's or the (m)Other's desire and into accepting Paresh Babu as the (new) paternal metaphor. Of course, this process was aided by Gora's own real life experiences, and by Sucharita who function in the novel as the Lacanian *objet-petit a*, that is, as the object-lure that decouples Gora the Hindu from Gora the Nationalist. The final moment is reserved for Krishnadayal's *parole* that lets Gora know that he is not a Hindu. According to Biswas, the tension at the heart of the novel stems from the hidden truth about Gora's identity which informs the circuit of the Mother-Child dyad as an unknown desire thus failing to establish the function of the Father. Gora remains trapped in Anadomeyee's desire and his staunch Hindu nationalism is merely a reflection of his attempt to remain safely ensconced within the desire of the (m)Other. It is only because of his lived experiences, his interaction with Paresh Babu and Sucharita, and finally his father's 'No' that Gora manages to confront the truth about his identity and realize his ideological fallacy. But Biswas makes no

attempt to address or relate Gora's psychological make up with the historical context. Instead, he argues that the psychoanalytic story of Gora reveals itself in spite of the novels ideological moorings. Specifically, he concludes his 1999 essay with the statement "[this] is the psychoanalytic story that *Gora*, in spite of being a historical novel on religious and political issues, begins to reveal about itself" (Biswas 156). It appears from Biswas's comment that the 'psychoanalytical story" of *Gora* is independent of the novel's political and religious contexts.

My objections to Biswas's conclusion are the following:

1] Biswas performs a historical erasure by not recognizing the immediate socio-political context of the novel without reference to which no study of the novel can be complete. (Correspondingly, it presents psychoanalysis as a discipline that is useful only in 'revealing' individual psychological states that appear to function independent of the social or ideological sphere. This kind of a reading is problematic and distant from both Freudian and Lacanian thinking given for both subjectivity and identity are determined through the function of social mechanisms such as the Super ego or the symbolic order.)

2] In ignoring the ideological context, the article also fails to explicate Gora's problematic relation with the paternal metaphor in greater contextual detail. By this I mean, that while Biswas identifies Gora's failure to dissociate himself from the desire of the (m)Other in context of Krishnadayal's own problematic transformation into a staunch Brahmin in later life – Gora identifies the object of the (m)Other's desire and attempts to identify himself with that object, namely Krishnadayal – Gora [and Biswas no less] fails to locate the ideological itinerary of Krishnadayal's transformation in the first place. To elaborate: Krishnadayal was a radical nonconformist in his early life and changed only after his retirement from British administrative service. This early life of Krishnadayal cannot be understood unless we read its ideological

context – the Young Bengal movement. Unlike the parties involved in a struggle over Hinduism in the 1830s and 40s, the Brahmo's insisting on reforming Hinduism and the conservative Hindus refusing any such activities, the Young Bengal movement completely refused Hinduism and its socio-cultural practices. They openly flouted established customs and beliefs – converting to Christianity, partaking beef and wine, seeking opportunities to violate Hindu sacred ordainments, and remaining devoted to a life driven by rationalist positivism. The movement, which enlisted the best minds of Bengal as its members, students of the famed Hindu College and disciples of Henry Derozio, was simply another response to the colonial situation. A response which was not interested in engaging with the tradition-modernity or past-present or East-West debates, but professed an absolute approximation of the West – its religion, its culture, its habits, and even its politics.[237] This short-lived Young Bengal movement caused a sudden rupture within the mid-19th century colonial symbolic order thoroughly vitiating traditional subject positions held by the reformists and conservatives on questions of social reform, or betters still, social reform as a question of how to best negotiate the colonial situation. These radicals opened up a lack in the socio-symbolic with their demands for overhauling changes and announcements of the demise of all things Hindu. The movement was founded on a comprehensive demand to dismiss, erase, and sentence to death Hinduism and its social strictures. In context of this desire for murdering the age-old 'Primal' Law, we can locate Krishnadayal's later life transformation into a puritanical Hindu and his friend Paresh Babu's conversion to Brahmoism as distinctive acts of retroactive suture – orthodox Hinduism and

[237] Kailsah Chunder Dutt, the nephew of Soshee Dutt, and a staunch Young Bengal member thus conceived of an urban Jacobin anti-colonial movement as the only way to uproot British dominion from over India as early as 1835. See, Kailash Chunder Dutt, 'A Journal of Forty-Eight Hours of the Year 1945,' in *Selections from 'Bengaliana,'* 149-159.

reformist Brahmoism serve as imaginary stitchings on holes that their youthful excesses and radical social/cultural practices had enunciated.

3] Finally, there is historical and/or ideological fulcrum of the Indian Mutiny that often goes uncommented on in context of the novel. As Suvir Kaul points out, it is this period of turmoil that ultimately led to Gora's birth and adaptation by Hindu parents. In *Gora*, Kaul argues, Tagore revisits and retrieves discourses of the Mutiny, for instance by using the imaginary of the 'white women under threat,' for writing his novel on Indian nationalism and nationalist imaginary. But is this the only agency played by the Mutiny in the novel? I think not. Similarly, the issue of identity and subjectivity, which Biswas draws through his study of Gora's desire as the (m)Other's desire also does not adequately engage the question of colonial situation as productive of psycho-pathologies and identities.

We must therefore turn to Nandy whose work, especially his *Intimate Enemy* and *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*, offers a significant critical vector to transcend this deadlock between psychoanalysis and history. Nandy says that *Gora* should be read as Tagore's response to the growing culture of ultra Hindu nationalism – the poet's critique of and dissent against a culture that had been produced as an epiphenomenon of colonialism itself. Nationalism and notions of guarded, secured identities, Nandy believes, is criticized in *Gora* as well as in Tagore's subsequent works, *Ghare-Baire* and *Char Adhyay*. *Gora* is one of the many sites used by Tagore for threshing out questions regarding nationalism, masculinity, and identity. And according to Nandy, in this novel Tagore situates the character of Gora in an Oedipal scenario which he must denounce in order to find and experience the reality of Indian plurality. Gora must evolve out of the mechanistic ideas about nation, race, and culture propounded by the Other, or the colonial system, if he is to finally realize 'his' true calling and 'discover' his nation. The Other discourse

or the Other's discourse in Nandy is obviously western discourses of nation, which Tagore had severely condemned in his essays on Nationalism. Nandy pursues his argument through two directions, first, Gora's inability to think independently of Western discourses about the nation, and, second, his failure to evolve out of a struggle that pits him against a Father who had been dissipate in the past. Dissipation associated with effeminacy and thus standing against the muscular culture of (western) identity, Nandy asserts, leads Gora to affirm his own derivative discourse of muscular Hindu nationalism. However, it is the final realization of his own 'outsiderness' which helps Gora to successfully realize his own feminine principles and emerge out of his dependence of the Other's desires, here the desire or discourse of the West.

It is needless to add that I introduce into Nandy's reading a number of Lacanian propositions in order to establish a connection between his sociological critique of Gora as the subject of the desire of the West and Biswas's argument that Gora is trapped in the desire of the mother or Other. The operative Lacanian concept is that desire is always the desire of the Other or a product of the symbolic order. This allows us to arrive at the analytical platform shared by Nandy and Biswas regarding the core problematic in the novel. We can state this central problematic in *Gora* as the problematic of desire as extraneous; that is, desire as the desire of the Other. In this situation, authentic identity can only be asserted when the subject realizes his/her abject predicament and succeeds in traversing the imaginary constructions such predicaments perpetuate. This argument can also lead us into understanding why *Gora* 'begins' in the Mutiny. Tagore's dissent against the breed of Hindu nationalism and brood of Hindu nationalists can only find situation if we follow how this group as well as their discourses emerge only in the post-Mutiny era, especially in form of a reaction against the Mutiny, and that too by borrowing deeply from imperial discourses. The 'bourgeois question,' or the bourgeois nationalist consciousness

that I trace in the preceding chapter, should make this context crystal clear. Tagore locates the origins of ultra Hindu nationalism in the Mutiny and criticizes bourgeois nationalism for unconsciously subscribing to principles espoused by the fifty-seven rebels while consciously appearing to distance these tenets as regressive. This is especially true of the kind of nationalism that Bengal witnessed after the decision to partition Bengal in 1905. This breed of Hindu nationalism, Tagore believed, both materially and epistemically distanced the Muslim minorities. And he held this belief till the very last of his days as is evident from his letter to Subhas Bose on the issue of selecting Bankim's 'Bande Mataram' as the National anthem.[238] As Nandy's thesis explains, nationalist demands were unconsciously rooted in psychologies produced in the wake of the Mutiny and consciously derived from Western discourses. Both to Tagore, we may infer, were fallible – since, religion cannot be mixed with politics, exclusive idealism does not respond to the reality of Indian civilizational plurality, therefore, the very mechanics of Hindu nationalism, conscious and unconscious, is faulty.

Revolutionary War and Imperialism: Tagore and Nationalism II

The transition in Tagore's thinking about nationalism occurs between 1898 and 1910, following the rise of militant Hindu nationalism, the failure and excesses of the *Swadeshi* agitation, and the general broadening of the poet's consciousness about political action within the colonial situation. In 1908, while *Gora* was being serialized in *Prabasi*, Tagore published an essay on the Russian revolutionary Vera Saganova. Praising Seganova's revolutionary career and life, the poet cautions his Bengali readers in unequivocal terms that though the revolution in Russia is praiseworthy it cannot be imitated or followed in India. He says the social restructuring that is necessary for India cannot be achieved through a "chaotic revolution" [উচ্ছৃঙ্খল বিপ্লব]. What is necessary, he argues, is a tightening of interpersonal bonds and regular enhancement of

[238] See epigraph 1.

commonplace intelligence. These and not enmity towards the 'other,' he insists, is required. Enmity, he notes, dissipates existing strengths and is injurious to the national health.[239]

The essay appears provoked by Tagore's concern over the growing dangers posed by militant nationalism – already by that time several successful and unsuccessful 'hits' on British officials had been carried out by the revolutionaries.[240] Tagore called these assassinations irrational and reactionary acts. But he also asserted that these incidents and rise of militant nationalism in general were results of the oppressive rule – "It is our misfortune," he writes, "that the present rule in Bengal has assumed such oppressive character that it is directly responsible for evoking the repressed violent impulses of our countrymen in secret and in open. When the dominant powers tyrannize the weak, the weak adopts a circuitous path in order to retaliate. In this way, the dominant's tyranny draws the meek into unethical realms" (qtd. in Pal vol. 6 3). In a letter to Nirjharani Sarkar, written at around this time, Tagore regretted how the youth of Bengal were being misdirected by the revolutionary fervor and losing their lives for nothing (ibid. 5). One is reminded of Tagore's essay on the queen of Jhansi, where too he had lamented about the rebels losing their lives unnecessarily. In the same year, Tagore published পথ ও পাথেয় ['Way and Means'] where in the wake of the Muzzarfur Bomb Incident, he asked for the restablishment of peace and calm (*RRWB* vol. 12 974-991). The essay condemns 'terrorism' warning, again, the youth of Bengal from imitating revolutions carried out in other countries. In a public lecture organized by Chaitanya Library at the Minerva Theatre on 25 May 1908, Tagore presented this essay with the note that it was written "soley for the young men" of Bengal. Unboudtedly, the poet was rattled by the actions taken by the 'young men' of Bengal – the failed

[239] I quote here extracts from the essay cited in Pal, রবি জীবনী [Rabi-Jivani/The Life of Rabi]; vol.6, 3.
[240] Tagore, Pal contends, was also aware of the radical writings preaching guerilla war against the British that were published in the revolutionary mouthpieces *Bande Mataram* and *Yugantar* in 1907. (Ibid. 4).

assassination attempt on Kingsford by Prafula Chaki, aged 20, and Khudiram Bose, aged 19, and their untimely deaths as a result.[241]

Prashata Pal believes that these essays do not suggest the poet was opposed to the ideology of gaining independence from British colonial rule, rather he was merely skeptical of an untimely revolutionary war enveloping a country that was yet to form a national consciousness (Pal vol. 6 8). This point can be clearly deduced from Tagore's essay সমস্যা ['Problem'], published in 1908 in response to criticism made by nationalists of his 'Way and Means' essay. Responding to criticism, the poet says his 'Way and Means' is not inundated with sentimentalism, rather, it reasons,

> in a country where national unity [Tagore's word is মহাজাতি] has not been formed, there cannot be any independence. Where is the 'self' [স্ব] in *swadhinata* [স্বাধীনতা/Independence]? Whose independence? If the Bengalis in India gain independence, the *Nayyars* of the South will not claim themselves as independent and if the *Jats* in the West achieve freedom then the Asameese of the East will not regale on the occasion. In Bengal only, there is no indication that the Muslims are ready to associate their lot with the Hindus. Then who will be independent? (cited in Pal vol. 6 8).

Tagore contends, a united front against the British appears impossible in the present and even if by any chance the British are forced to withdraw it would only lead to a civil war. In *Gora* we witness a novelistic reformulation of these ideas, namely, an ideology founded on exclusivity cannot adequately address the complexities of the Indian polity nor lead it out of the quagmire of alien rule.

[241] The radical revolutionaries responded harshly to Tagore. Between 27 June and 1 May four articles, 'Mediaeval Abstraction and Modern Problem in India'(May 27), 'Patriotic Reform and National Ideals' (May 29), 'Babu Rabindranath Tagore on the Present Situation' (May 30), and, 'Rabindranath on the Present Situation II' (Jun1), were published in *Bande Mataram* criticizing Tagore's views.

In the three texts discussed above, we move from distinct and passionate identification with the Mutiny and its leaders ("Jhansir Rani") to a more critical and measured tone articulating Tagore's position as circumspect and skeptical ('Durasha' and *Gora*). It is not a stretch to say that Tagore found the Uprising lacking in all those virtues he cherished as necessary for the 'liberation' of the East. The Mutiny was not only lacking ideological mooring and guidance, it was also founded on principles borrowed from religion. As such, it suffered from the same mechanics that condemn Gandhian nationalism to failure. In a certain ironical sense then we can discern in Tagore's opinions about and representations of the Mutiny a shadow of western discourses – the Mutiny was a reactionary, feudal war fought as a war of religion. Does Tagore who enunciate time and again the importance of overcoming western discourses falls prey himself when it comes to the question of the Mutiny? Does he, in his attempts to deconstruct imaginaries afflicting life and destining humans to egoistic misery, succumb to the imaginary of the Mutiny as drawn out by the colonizers? In absence of any detailed exposition of the Mutiny in Tagorean oeuvre we possibly cannot conclusively arrive at a definite answer on these questions. Nevertheless, I am certain that for readers who look at the trajectory from his juvenilia to *Gora*, there is enough reason to propose a speculative hypothesis that Tagore found the Uprising too religious for his liking. The question is not whether Tagore supported or opposed the rebellion, but rather how he conceived it. And it seems he found fault with the rebellions over the top religiosity.

Tagore is however not the only person to think the fifty-seven rebellion as a religious war. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar who penned his *The Indian War of Independence-1857* in 1908 also believed it to be so. But that is where apparently the similarity between the two ends. For while Tagore dismissed the Mutiny as a religious war, Savarkar celebrated it because of its

religious flair. So is there really any comparison between Tagore and Savarkar? Can we really call them "unequal partners"? If yes, for what?

III

Introducing Vinayak Damodar Savarkar

David 'Bunny' Garnett, writer, publisher, and a member of the Bloomsbury group, was a colorful character. He counted Indian expatriate revolutionaries in London and Paris amongst his friends, visited the India House – hearth of revolutionary activities in London – regularly, and once even hatched a daring plan to rescue Savarkar from a British prison where the Indian revolutionary was imprisoned on charges of conspiring to wage war against the Empire. Garnett records his scintillating experiences with Indian revolutionaries in London – his failed attempt to release Savarakar and his failed visit to Morocco with the Bengali revolutionary 'Dutt' to join the forces of Abdul Karim fighting against the Spanish army – in his autobiography *The Golden Echo* (136-162).

Garnett met Savarkar at the India House in 1909. On his first meeting he heard the revolutionary reading aloud from his banned book *The Indian War of Independence – 1857*. Garnett records his impressions of this meeting thus:

> I looked at Savarkar and thought that this was the most sensitive face in the room and yet the most powerful. I watched how he spat out his words, with almost convulsive movements. […] he was reading about a battle in which an Indian general called Tatia [*sic*] Tope had been defeated by English troops and Sikhs (*Golden* 145).

As his interaction with Savarkar increased, he was, more and more, "struck by his extraordinary personal magnetism." Garnett writes, "There was an intensity of faith in the man and a curious single-minded recklessness which were deeply attractive to me. The filthy place in which he was

living brought out both his refinement and also his lack of human sympathy, both characteristics of high-caste Brahmin [:] indifferent [and] oblivious to his environment. He was [always] wrapped in visions" (ibid. 148-149).[242] Garnett adds, "What was his vision? I cannot say, but I believe it was that India was a volcano, which had erupted violently during the Mutiny and which could be made to erupt again, and that every act of terrorism and violence would beget further violence and further terrorism, until Indians regained their manliness and their mother country her freedom. All the sufferings involved were but a fitting sacrifice to her" (ibid. 149). Garnett's impressions of Savarkar provide us with a fecund description of Savarkar's character and mindset during the time he composed and was busy promoting his "extremely propagandist history of the Indian Mutiny" (ibid. 145).

A Complete Rearrangement of the Historic Man: Savarkar on the Mutiny

It is misleading to Savarkar's *The Indian War of Independence – 1857* as history. It contains the very ideology that fuelled Savarkar's revolutionary passions and beliefs, some of which Garnett so vividly describes. The book, Savarkar hoped, would inspire the masses by reminding them of the sacrifices borne by Indians during the Mutiny. In this sense it was an intensely pedagogical exercise aimed at (re)-organizing a nationalist armed struggle against colonial rule. (Armed anti-colonial revolution, Savarkar notes in his book, is the only way to achieve independence from foreign rule). While this pedagogical quality makes the work similar to other nineteenth century and early- twentieth century Indian nationalist writings, Savarkar's narrative is distinct from all these as far as it forcefully articulates the necessity of conjoining

[242] Savarkar had to go into hiding after the assassination of Curzon Wyllie by Madan Lal Dhingra and the consequent closing down of the India House. Garnett who visited him during this time found it beyond imagination how Savarkar lived in "one of the dirtiest slums in London" and yet remain completely apathetic toward everything around him. Garnett's friend and revolutionary Dutt, who later accompanied Garnett to Morocco, found life despicable, especially of the English poor. But Savarkar, notes Garnett, remained completely nonchalant even to scenes of utmost depravity.

religion with violent anti-colonial resistance. In stark contrast to the nineteenth-century Bengali bourgeois who decried all forms of religious accentuation as a regression into pre-Enlightenment and pre-scientific Asianism, or for Tagore who found religion a serious impediment on the path towards inclusive nationalism and better still universal humanism, Savarkar finds this distinction between religion and anti-colonial revolution forced and problematic. Central to his appraisal of the Mutiny is the idea that religion and struggle for independence are inseparable in the Indian context. The Uprising is not significant because it sought *Swaraj* or freedom, but because the idea of *Swaraj* was driven by a desire to protect *Swadharma* or religion. It is the 'first' war of national independence because it does not segregate the political from the religious but truthfully accommodates religion or *Swadharma* in the political discourse for liberation. The fight for freedom is a fight to protect one's religion, since absence of freedom or slavery implies an absence of religion. Religion, Savarkar argues, binds its followers to the duty of resisting slavery; hence, it is the foundation of all anti-colonial struggle against subjection imposed through alien rule.

The metaphor of the volcano, which Garnett describes in recalling Savarkar's view on the Uprising, is fitting. The book is divided into four parts – "The Volcano," "The Eruption," "The Conflagration," and "Temporary Pacification." Savarkar describes the Mutiny as the surfacing of buried and deep-seated *ressentiment* of the Indian people against alien rule and oppression. In the first chapter of the first part, titled "Swadharma and Swaraj," Savarkar lays out his central argument regarding the structural relation between religion and the political. Contesting existing imperial accounts of the Mutiny as false, prejudiced, and lacking objectivity, he asserts that these pay more attention to accidental causes of the event thereby representing a national war for freedom as a mere mutiny of sepoys. Insisting that "the essence of a revolution can never be

made plain" by citing tangential reasons like the cartridge controversy, Savarkar defines the 1857 `emeute as nothing less than a watershed event that effected a "complete rearrangement of the life of historic man" (Savarkar 2-3). He claims that those who ascribe the Mutiny to "accidental causes" do so deliberately to downplay what was essentially a struggle for gaining complete independence from slavery and trenchant oppression. "It is not surprising that to one, who thinks that a mighty rising like that of '57 can be produced by such trifles [cartridges], it was only 'a company of inconsiderable fools.'" Issues like cartridges, he says, "might explain some incidents of the Revolution but not the Revolution as a whole […] The real causes were deeper and more inward" (ibid. 5; 7). What then are the real causes and governing motivations? Savarkar's answer is categorical. These are the,

> great principles [of] Swadharma and Swaraj. In the thundering roar of 'Din, Din,' which rose to protect religion, when there were evident signs of a cunning, dangerous, and destructive attack on religion dearer than life, and in the terrific blows dealt at the chain of slavery with the holy desire of acquiring Swaraj, when it was evident that chains of political slavery had been put round them and their God-given liberty wrested away by subtle tricks – in these two, lies the root-principle of the Revolutionary War. In what other history is the principle of love of one's religion and love of one's country manifested more nobly than in ours? (ibid. 7).

Temporary and accidental causes like the greased cartridges and annexation of Oudh, avers Savarkar, aided the "spreading of these traditional and noble principles" reviving "most wonderfully the slightly unconscious feelings of Hindusthan, and the people began to prepare for the right for Swadharma and Swaraj" (ibid. 6-8). Like Tagore in his juvenilia, Savarkar also believes that the Uprising was a moment of waking. The "principles of Swadharma and Swaraj

[are] embedded in the bone and marrow of all the sons of Hindusthan! They might be darkened for a time by the mist of slavery – even the sun has its clouds – but very soon the strong light of these self-same principles pierces through the mist and chases it away" (ibid. 8).

Savarkar is however thoroughly conscious of running up against the wall of Enlightenment secularism and liberal modernity by claiming admiration for the Uprising as a religious war. He is equally aware that in saying the war was fought on principles of religion he is repeating established imperial belief in the religious character of the revolt; an argument that corroborates theories about Asiatic treachery and religiosity. But "Swadharma" or religion in Savarkar is not simply religion in the sense of ecclesiastical beliefs. It is more importantly a way of life. He asks, are "these two principles [of Swaraj and Swadharma] different and exclusive of each other?" His answer: 'No.' "Orientals," he notes, "have never had the idea that Swadharma and Swaraj have no connection with each other." Unlike the West where the church and state are separate, and the political always secular, an argument he thoroughly dismisses in the course of showing how missionary activities were in fact supported by the colonial state, the "Eastern mind has maintained a full and traditional belief […] that there is no vast barrier between Heaven and earth but that the two are ends of one and the same thing" (ibid. 9-10; 54-62). He explains further that,

> Our idea of Swadharma […] is not contradictory to that of Swaraj. The two are connected as means and end. Swaraj without Swadharma is despicable and Swadharma without Swaraj is powerless. The sword of material power, Swaraj, should always be ready drawn for our object, our safety is the other world, Swadharma. This trend of the Eastern mind will be often found in its history. The reason why, in the East all revolutions take a religious form, nay more, the reason why Eastern history knows of no revolutions

> unconnected with religion, lies in the all-embracing meaning that the word 'Dharma' has (ibid. 10).

In support of his claim Savarkar cites the proclamations issued by the royal courts of Delhi and Oudh exhorting the people of India, both Hindus and Muslims, to unite against the British not only in defense of their religions but also because resisting slavery and oppression is decreed as duty in both Hinduism and Islam. The unity of the classes and races in this war he asserts is the strongest evidence that "Indian warriors drew their swords […] for Swadharma and Swaraj, feeling it the duty of every man for the rights given to man by God" (ibid.). He argues that the real meaning of *dharma* is not religion, nor does it imply religious beliefs, rituals, and customs. Rather, *dharma* prescribes an ethical path, divined by God, and one that man must follow. Exertion and enduring of slavery and tyrannical oppression constitute a falling out from that true path of *dharma*. Consequently, the rebellious desire for freedom is not merely a desire to achieve independence but independence and freedom are themselves divine rights bestowed to man. Consequently, the violation of one man's freedom by another man must be resisted. This is the true meaning of *dharma*. "What is wealth? Where is land? Where is power? In the plague of slavery," Savarkar writes, "all this divine independence is all but dead." "The command of God is, Obtain Swaraj, for that is the chief key to the protection of Dharma" (ibid. 10). Reminding one of Bankim, Savarkar attests, "He who does not attempt to acquire Swaraj, he who sits silently in slavery, he is an atheist and hater of Religion" (ibid. 10-11). For

> To allow the existence of a slavery under which […] unjust acts of oppression […] and hundreds of other unmentionable crimes […] are committed and encouraged and to bow the head in submission to the perpetrators thereof, is not this the very destruction of Religion? What religion is there which has not condemned dependence and slavery? The

> ultimate goal of true religion is likeness unto the nature of the Supreme Being that moves everything, of Him who made all beings capable of becoming all-perfect. There must not be imperfection in man if he is to be like the All-Perfect. But how can there be anything but imperfection in a country where there is slavery? God is the essence of justice, and slavery is absence of justice. God is the essence of freedom; slavery is absence of freedom. Hence, where there is God there cannot be slavery, and where there is slavery there cannot be God or Godliness. Where there is no place for God, there can be no religion. In short, true religion cannot exist where slavery, the nursery of injustice, is rampant. Slavery is the straight road to Hell and true religion is a means of attaining Heaven. To walk in the path leading towards Heaven, the shackles of slavery must be broken (ibid. 53-54).

Giving a detailed account of British injustices, Savarkar proclaims, since "[o]ne injustice begets another. To allow the continuance of this system of interfering with religion by means of laws made by aliens was to follow the lifting of the sword of Aurangzeb," that is, to accept slavery and destruction of God given rights. Resistance against tyranny is also a part of subcontinental history – every time freedom and religion have been threatened, the people have taken up arms – Hindus under Shivaji had taken up arms under the directive of the saint Ramdas against Aurangzeb. And "when the English had begun to take up the role of Aurangzeb, there was no other remedy than that India must produce a Shivaji or a Guru Govind. And such was the usual impression all over India" (ibid. 58).

Savarkar terms this sensitivity to "Swaraj" and "Swadharma" as the "mental science," which explains, according to him, the "breath and bore" of the revolution. Nothing else is adequate for explaining why so many people from diverse classes, backgrounds, and religious

denominations gathered around the banner of revolution and fought alongside the sepoys. And because it was a war fought on the principles of "Swadharma" and "Swaraj," it "does not lose its luster by defeat" (ibid. 11). This 'mental science' of the East, Savarkar says, also explains why the "Mahomedan and the Hindu forgot their old religious antipathies to join against the Christian" (ibid. 11). Likening the Mutiny to the purging sacrificial fire of the Vedas, Savarkar sentimentalizes the event as a great religious event, one that sought to cleanse the country of evils perpetrated by the British for hundred years (ibid. 67-70). In this sacrificial pit both Hindus and Muslims immersed themselves under the leadership of the Marhatta and Mughal princes "to fight a united fight, to make India free and, by removing internecine warfare, to establish the rule of the United States of India which would, thus, take its rightful place in the council of the free nations of the earth." The meaning of 'Hindustan' for these revolutionaries, Savarkar contends, was not the "land of the Hindus," but "the united nation of the adherents of Islam as well as Hinduism" (ibid. 75). Under the oppressive colonial situation, the Mutiny represented a moment for consigning the antagonism between the Hindus and Muslims to the past. They were no more the "rulers and [the] ruled" or "foreigner and native," rather, forced by the high-handed oppressive regime, they were united as "brothers […] as children of the soil of Hindustan." "Their names were different, but they were all children of the same Mother; India therefore being the common mother of these two, they were brothers by blood." Enmity between Hindus and Muslims in face of British tyranny, the rebels realized was "unreasonable and stupid." The "broad features" of this Revolutionary movement were that "the Hindus and the Mahomedans should unite and fight shoulder to shoulder for the independence of their country and that, when freedom was gained, the United States of India should be formed under the Indian rulers and princes" (ibid. 75-76). As proof Savarkar cites from a rebel Proclamation which reads: "young

and old, big and small, literate and illiterate, civil and military, all Hindusthanee brothers should leap forth into the field to free themselves from the Kaffirs" (ibid. 79).

It is interesting to note that Savarkar who in later life turned into a rabid proponent of Hindu supremacy has no qualms in co-opting the word *kafir* [non-believer in Allah] from the Islamic discourse of jihad as a driving force for the Mutiny. Ignoring the use of the word by some Muslim rulers and clerics against Hindus in pre-colonial period, Savarkar sees it in context of the Mutiny as the perfect word for characterizing and rallying pure anti-British sentiments. Repeatedly, he reiterates one single point: the Revolution

> will be ever memorable in the history of Hindusthan for […] proclaim[ing] by beat of drum the end for the time being at any rate of the continuous fight between the Hindus and Mahomedans, dating from the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni. It was proclaimed first that the Hindus and the Mahomedans are not rivals, not conquerors and the conquered, but brethren! Bharatmata (Mother Ind[ia]) who was, in times past, freed from Mahomedan yoke by Shivaji, [Rana] Pratap Singh, Chattrasal, Pratapaditya, Guru Govind Singh, and Mahadaji Scindia – that Bharatmata gave the sacred mandate that day, 'Henceforward you are equal and brothers; I am equally the mother of you both!' The […] Hindus and Mahomedans proclaimed that India was their country and that they were all brethren, the days when Hindus and Mahomedans unanimously raised the flag of national freedom at Delhi. Be those grand days ever memorable in the history of Hindusthan!" (ibid. 126).

Contemporary critics often overlook Savarkar's open co-option of Islamic discourses and his theorization of "Swadharma" as duty in this text. Jyotirmaya Sharma, for example, insists that Savarkar's use of the term dharma means religion and "does not have the other philosophical

connotations that are also associated with the term" (Sharma 127). But from my reading, Savarkar's use of the word "Swadharma" or dharma in the text does not appear as simply religion. Insofar as the entire edifice of his narrative stands on the ideological fulcrum of establishing a close and complimentary relationship between the religious and the political, religion is through and through an ethical concept emphasizing resistance against oppressive slavery. There is no denying that the notion of Hinduvta, that Savarkar was to most thoroughly delineate in his Pamphlet 'Who is a Hindu?' (1920), is present in his argument as far as he writes that anyone who inhabits the land of the 'Sapta-Sindhu' or the seven-rivers of the Indus basin, irrespective of religious beliefs, are Hindus. But he also shows this identity as produced through historical forces. The Mutiny as one such historical force brings together the Hindu and Muslim in a war against alien rule thus uniting them. This notion of History as an external force working upon human subjects is also radically present in the metaphor of the Uprising as a sacrificial, purging fire – it absolves the past and differences among the subject people to raise them up together in a ethical war against an unethical imposition of slavery by a colonizing power. Similarly, Savarkar openly calls the 1857 Revolution "a *Jehâd* for Independence! This is religious war for justice! Those who fall in such battles will be their country's *shahids* [martyrs]" (ibid. 89). The concept of *dharma-yuddha*, borrowed from Hinduism, and the notion of *Jihad*, loaned from Islam, become one and the same in his reading of the Mutiny as a war against British perfidy. Both, he says, preach an uncompromising devotion to the path of God and upliftment of the soul as most important, but either of which is impossible under physical, moral, and spiritual slavery instituted by the British. He brings together both Hindu rebels and Muslim revolutionaries under this one word – *jihad* – just as he insists on envisioning the two religious groups living in harmony and under the common name of the "Hindusthanee."[243] Unlike what

[243] In his notoriously 'communal' 1923 Pamphlet, 'Who is a Hindu?' one sees the reemployment of this notion of

Sharma argues, the more important problem to be noted here is the problem of creating a secular religiosity for the nation. That is, to forge a constitutive discourse that can invent the patriot-subject-soldier from the acolyte. To effect a translation that would invite the one who is ready to lay down his life for God to lay down his life for the imaginary institution of India. (It is however outside the scope of this chapter to flesh this out in any detail).

There is nothing in Savarkar's work that can be called original. The ideas contained are either consciously borrowed from nineteenth-century Indian writers or unconsciously derived from western discourses. Savarkar's emphasis on religion as ethical duty and conceptualization of the nation as Mother appear distinctly derived from Bankim Chandra Chatterjee; the book also ends with the famous words from Bankim's *Anandamath*: "Bande Mataram." At the same time, the attempt to represent Hinduism as a ethical practice and dissociated from customary rituals reflect a strong western influence in the desire to de-paganize the religion (Nandy *Creating* 67-68). Likewise, Savarkar's attempt to write a 'history' of the Revolution free from imperial prejudice echoes earlier attempts on the part of the bourgeois nationalists to write independent histories of the subcontinent and its people. The most distinguishing feature of Savarkar's derivative narrative in this context is his revisioning of the event as an auspicious moment for the

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'Hindusthanee' or inhabitant of Hindustan in terms of *Hinduvta* or 'Hinduness.' Here again, the idea is not so much of being a Hindu as in follower of Hinduism as it is about acknowledging symbolic debts to the geographical space delineated since time in memoriam as Hindustan – the land east of the river Indus. In this pamphlet, of course, it is not enough to be an inhabitant of this land, but the land should be regarded as *pitribhumi* or fatherland as well as *punyabhumi* or holy-land. This ideology negates Savarkar's theory in *The Indian War of Independence-1857* that followers of Hinduism and Islam can live in harmony as children of the same motherland. Over and above to this geographical determinism, his 1923 Pamphlet adds the issue of 'holy-land' – if Hindustan [India] is not your holy-land then your allegiance lies elsewhere and accordingly you are not a Hindu. See, 'Who Is A Hindu.'Critics who find this theorization of Hinduvta as excluding Muslims and the present day Hindu-Right who believe India is not the 'holy-land' for the Muslims and thus Muslims deserve to be excommunicated need to be reminded of the words of the fourth Caliph Hazrat Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, who said, "Of all places on the earth the holiest and most fragrant is India." Qtd. in Nandy 'Creating' 67n16. I do not cite this to defend Savarkar. In all possibilities, he too was unaware of this comment by Hazrat Ali. But it does show the frailty of discourse as well as the accommodative power of Savarkar's attempt at building a strictly territorial imaginary of the Indian nation through the concept of Hinduness or Hinduvta. And in all fairness to Savarkar, the territorial conceptualization of the nation predates him by centuries. It is found in the *Vishnu-Purana*, though chances are that Savarkar borrowed it from nineteenth century Bengali writers. See, Nandy 'Creating' 67n15.

revival of Hindu masculinity. The Mutiny is to Savarkar, as it was to a young Tagore, a moment when buried Hindu martiality was reawakened, Hindu spirituality rekindled, and a sense of national belonging fostered amongst the inhabitants of the land (Savarkar 534). The tension of course stems from the fact that in spite of his desire to radically revise the Mutiny as a nationalist moment, his arguments unabashedly echo imperial narratives. Most obvious is the view that the Revolution was a product of feudal planning. Educated and erudite members of the courts and city preached revolution to the sepoys – "It was the custom to have a Mullah and a Pundit in every regiment for religious purposes. Taking advantage of this, the Revolutionaries entered the service as regimental Mullas and Pundits at the falling of the night, used to preach Revolution to the Sepoys directly […] these political Sanyasis toured from village to village for two years preaching Revolution, and at last succeeded in sowing the seeds of the terrible war to come" (ibid. 83). The Revolutionaries here are not the same as the sepoys. The latter need to be tutored since they lack consciousness. The Revolution was planned, organized, and executed by the aristocratic and literate gentry; the ideology of a united front was also Nana Sahib's dream and spread through Royal Proclamations and *tamashas*. The sepoys and common masses fought for a vision conceived and nurtured by the elite. In this, Savarkar not only reproduces imperial belief that feudal lords led the movement and the sepoys were mere pawns, but also reveals an entrenched bourgeois consciousness that sidesteps and distances the subaltern from assuming any significant agency within nationalist discourses about the Mutiny.

As I note in my previous chapter, the Mutiny in bourgeois writings is a site for reinserting bourgeois ideals and agencies into a historical moment from which the bourgeois was constitutively missing. The attempt at redefining the merits and failures of the Mutiny appropriately strengthens the pedagogical task by reinscribing the event in and through bourgeois

terms and ideologies. This general aspect of nationalist imaginations of the Mutiny is best illustrated in the conclusion of Savarkar's book where he examines why the Revolution failed. Savarkar says the primary fault of the revolutionaries was their failure to propose how the new social and political order after the removal of British regime would look. He argues, "though the plan of the destructive part of the Revolution was complete, its creative part was not attractive enough. Nobody was against destroying the English power; but what was about the future?" He believes parts of India were hesitant in joining the rebellion because "If it was only to re-establish the former internecine strife, if it was to bring again the same state of affairs as before, the same Moguls, the same Marhattas, and the same old quarrels – a condition, being tired of which, the nation, in a moment of mad folly, allowed foreigners to come in – if it were only for this, the more ignorant of the populace did not think it worth while to shed their blood for it." As a result, therefore, though "the Revolution worked out successfully as far as the destructive part was concerned; but, as soon as the time of construction came, indifference, mutual fear, and want of confidence sprang up." He argues that if "there had been set clearly before the people at large a new ideal attractive enough to captivate their hearts, the growth and completion of the Revolution would have been as successful and as grand as its beginning" (ibid. 542-543). From this it appears that the idea of 'United States of India' was either not fully proclaimed or it is Savarkar's own ideology superimposed on the Mutiny. Either way, Savarkar ends by saying that the "Revolution of 1857 was a test to see how far India had come towards unity, independence, and popular power. The fault of failure lies with the *idle, effeminate, selfish, and treacherous men* who ruined it" (ibid. 544) [emphasis mine]. Garnett was spot on when he said Savarkar envisioned the Mutiny as a test for Indian manliness and the most direct path to achieving freedom.

Evidently, the differences between Tagore and Savarkar revolve around their respective understandings of the function and agency of religion in nationalism and the discourse of spatiality in their conceptualizations of the nation. For Tagore, religion was responsible for vertically dividing the society, especially a racially diverse and religiously plural cultural space as India, and thus responsible for constraining the goal of nationalism to unite the colonized masses into one formidable force against alien rule. For Savarkar, religion as practice is not a problem since he centralizes a distinct spatial zone as India and inhabitants of that space irrespective of religion, class, and caste as Hindus or inhabitants of Hindustan. In his 1909 book, this notion of space dominates and religion as practice is not identified as a problem at all. Rather, the two major religions are shown as similar in their prescriptions of resisting alien hegemony as religious duty.

Yet there is an uncanny similarity between Tagore and Savarkar as far as both emphasize the centrality of religion in context of the Mutiny. Tagore believes it was the religious beliefs of the mutineers that led to the failure of the movement, while Savarkar asserts that because it was a religious war the Mutiny needs to be celebrated as the first war of Indian independence. They therefore subscribe to the most dominant imperial view about the Mutiny, namely, it was a war of religion. Allied to this, we find in both a disdain for the subaltern-rebel. The subaltern-rebel is either a victim of regressive religious beliefs, as in Tagore's 'Durasha,' or ignorant of social politics lacking any historical consciousness, as in Savarkar's narrative. Hence, the role of the subaltern-rebel in both resembles imperial representations that portray the rebels as boorish, regressive, and ignorant miscreants.

With these two problematics in mind, I want to turn to an investigation of what remains most misrepresented, obfuscated, and obscure in historical as well as fictional works on the

Mutiny, that is, the question of rebel consciousness. Were the subaltern-rebels ignorant bumpkins who sacrificed their lives misguided by rumors as British historians claim and for nothing (*ayatha*) as Tagore contests? Did they fall prey to a feudal conspiracy to restore princely rule over India or an 'Islamic' plot to overthrow the liberal and progressive government of the British? Did the two religions unambiguously and unconditionally unite out of a sense of religious duty preached by Islamic jurists or *ulemas*, clerics or *maulvis*, and Hindu Brahmin pundits under instruction from the royal houses of Shivaji and Timur as Savarkar contends? What would have happened if the sepoys had succeeded – end of rational modernity, restoration of pre-colonial barbaric feudal states, regression of the country into the middle ages as the indigenous nouveau bourgeois suspected? And the million dollar question: was 1857 a religious war, a *Jihad*, a revolution founded on obscurant superstitious beliefs of Muslims and Hindus? The parakeet that cries throughout Flora Annie Steel's *On the Face of the Waters* "din" and "futteh Muhammad" continues its plaintive cry even today. We hear it resonate through contemporary 'Western' writings and representations of the event as much we do in Mutiny literature of the last hundred years. Is there any truth to all these? Perhaps a definite answer is impossible to give and opinions will remain inconclusive forever, yet it is important to look at rebel documents from 1857 to form an idea about how the rebels conceived of the event? Was it a religious war? Was it a 'cry for freedom'?

CHAPTER VI

In the *Deen* of the Mutiny: The 1857 Insurrection, Jihad, and the Question of Subaltern Consciousness.

"What is History? Which stories should we regard as history? If tales of common men make history, then I will say the history that was made that day on the streets of Jhansi has no parallel. In the middle of densely clustered homes lay a paved roadway and maze of cobbled streets. Young boys, Pathans, Afghans, Bulendas, Maratha soldiers died fighting to the last on those streets. Blood flowed till the roads turned muddy and slippery. Witnessing those grotesque scenes children cried out. Flaming embers from burning houses littered the streets. History that was written by thousands of Indians on that day is the real history of India."

[Mahasweta Devi, ঝাঁসির রানি ('The Queen of Jhansi') 116-117].

"'*Deen! Deen! Futteh Mohammed*'." (For the Faith! For the Faith! Victory to Mohammed.) The war cry of the fiercest of all faiths was unmistakable; the first two syllables cutting the air, keen as a knife, the last with the blare as of a trumpet in them."

[Flora Annie Steel, *On the Face of the Water* 8].

I

The 'Gasp' of the Subaltern

In 2007, on the sesquicentennial anniversary of the Indian Mutiny, the British Broadcasting Corporation aired a three-part documentary titled *Clash of Worlds*. The documentary acknowledged the responsibility of the British Empire for the contemporary geo-political crises (9/11, London blasts, War in Afghanistan), and contextualized the present through three historical moments: the Indian Rebellion of 1857, the Mahdi uprising in Sudan in the 1880's, and the Palestine conflict of 1917. These three were the historical, genealogical, and ideological precursors of the contemporary geo-political crisis, according to the documentary. And a review of these events shows "how the century's old history of conflict between the West and Islam can help explain violence of recent events." For the "perpetrators of acts of violence against the West today" are inspired by the "same fundamental Islamic values" that motivated the rebels in 1857 (*Clash of the Worlds*).

That a chronotopic bridging of the present crisis in global capitalism with Europe's colonial past is attempted through a reference to the Indian mutiny is, however, not surprising. Nor, for that matter, is the investment of the culture machinery that has objectified anew the historical moment of 1857 to cast it as the originary moment, if not the primal scene, of the present crisis of liberal democracy unforeseen. The Mutiny was regularly invoked by British imperial and post-imperial discourses every time the empire and its capitalist interests were threatened. It was recalled into the collective memory during the Ilbert Bill crisis (1883), the partition of Bengal (1905-1911), the Jalianwalabagh massacres (1919), the transfer of power (1947) and, of course, during the 'revival of the Raj' in the 1980s when the working class struggle in England reached a high point. It has been similarly invoked during the Sudan crisis,

the First World War, the Palestine conflict, and, most recently, in the aftermath of 9/11 and the 'war on global terror.' What is most interesting is that the character of these discourses have remained the same in the last hundred and fifty years. Both then and as it is now, the Indian Uprising of 1857 is viewed as a struggle between Christian England and fundamentalist Islam, a "clash of civilizations" to borrow Samuel Huntington's phrase. The Uprising as a war of race and religion between the West and the East was the representative image of fifty-seven in the nineteenth century, and, it still is as scholars and popular media connect the present post-9/11 global crisis with the 1857 leaguer of the empire.

In recent years, arguments for reading the Indian Mutiny as a transhistorical moment encapsulating 'lessons' for liberal societies and neo-colonial empires have found most vocal expression in highly popular works penned by William Dalrymple, Charles Allen, and, of course, Niall Fergusson. In Dalrymple's *The Last Mughal* for instance, the rise of global "Islamic terrorism" has been linked directly to the rebellion; the birth of Al-Qaeda traced to the Deobandi School of Islamic learning and the role of religion in the conflagration primed as essential. The Mutiny has been, to repeat my Freudian allusion, re-constituted as the primal scene of our present-day crisis. Dalrymple disparages "revisionist 'socio-economic' interpretations of the Uprising" to emphasize the "primary role of religious confrontation." The rebellion, according to him, resulted from Evangelical Christianity threatening Hindu beliefs and provoking in consequence its "own nemesis in Islamic *jihad*" (Washbrook 8).

David Washbrook's critique that Dalrymple's study restores "an older understanding" about the Mutiny by deliberately evading the "socio-economic" contexts of the conflict is spot on (ibid. 8). But what Washbrook does not consider is how Dalrymple's historicization of the Mutiny is symptomatic of a larger problem that haunts most critical inquiries of the 1857

insurrection and is evidenced in *most* western accounts on the Mutiny. Namely, the difficulty of successfully situating the event within a grand narrative of History. As I argue above, nineteenth-century representations of the Mutiny reveal a primary anxiety about the impossibility of defining and/or negotiating the encounter; and this anxiety most comprehensively explains both the affective hold of the event on Anglo-Indian cultural consciousness and the continuing fascination with it in literature. The presence of a large number of fictional and non-fictional works on the subject is symptomatic of the need to ascertain meaning out of what appears to lie outside the realm and logic of sense; what was to most as diffused as a "breath on the face of the waters." And like all meaning-making exercises the attempt to define the Mutiny veers most often towards religion – religion becomes crucial for explaining the insurrection in absence of any concrete rationale.

Religion in mutiny narratives serves the function of what Lacan terms the "quilting point." Religion acts as the Master-Signifier for establishing narrative security. In other words, religion or the dissidents' preponderant dependence on religion is stressed to enunciate the ideological veracity of the Empire, on the one hand, and to dismiss the rebellion as regressive, on the other. It is not surprising, therefore, that in the wake of the 'war on global terror' the memory of the Mutiny has been resuscitated and a trajectory established between the rebels of 1857 and the Taliban. What is interesting of course is the intransigent character of this discourse. The idea of the rebel as a pre-political creature bereft of consciousness and inspired only by religious fanaticism has remained constant. So has the logical demand for exterminating these creatures who are a threat to our modern, liberal, and secular societies.

In this chapter, I argue how the "over determination" of religion (in an sense Althusserian sense) as the cause of the 1857 insurrection has not only obfuscated the question of subaltern-

rebel consciousness, but in consequence failed to secure any narrative security.[244] That is to say, how religion has failed to act as the "quilting point" for narrativizing the Mutiny by sidelining any possibility of understanding the subaltern's reasoning for rebelling. As a gesture, representations of the rebel as lacking ideological consciousness are no less fundamentalist than claims about rebel religiosity. The overwriting of the subaltern as bigoted has ensured that the true character of their dissent against the British government remains unresolved. The question of subaltern consciousness remains and will remain buried under the "din" of the Mutiny unless a radical revisioning of the subaltern's relation to religion is done. This chapter will offer some preliminary arguments about how such a rereading can be attempted. I go back to the archives in order to unearth what has been left conveniently buried for over the last one and half centuries: the voices and writings of the rebels to present them as scraps of proof attesting a consciousness that cannot be overarchingly characterized as religious. But prior to that let me dwell a little longer on imperial and Indian bourgeois discourses about 1857 as a religious war.

II

In the *deen* of the Mutiny

James Grant's immensely popular 1865 mutiny novel *First Love and Last Love* continually reminds its readers that

> [r]eligious rancour, hatred of race and colour alone, and no pure or high-souled sentiment of nationality animated the [mutineers]; and the objects of many were rendered plain enough by the mode in which, in their murmur of applause, they rang the changes on "*deen, deen,*" and "*loot-loot*" – religion, faith, and – plunder! (Grant I 164).

[244] Religion, that is to say, is the "structuring principle" that accounts for and explains the multi-faceted, multi-directional, and multi-sequential character of the Event.

Grant's passage voices a belief widely held by most in England and Europe at that time – the Indian Mutiny was a religious war inspired "by the teaching[s] of […] Hindoo Fakirs and dancing dervishes" (ibid. 185). The Hindu Fakir Gunga Rai and the Muslim dervish Falladeen in Grant's novel are called the "uncommissioned chaplains of the sepoy troops" and the "most ardent promoters of the mutiny." These men, the author solemnly discourses, are "one of those hypocrites who exist in all countries, and use religion as a means to an end" (ibid. 216; 162).

The idea that the rebels were reactionary miscreants who mutinied under the influence of fundamentalist beliefs forms the backbone of Grant's narrative. And though Grant concedes that "discord was first lighted by some of the Bible-distributing missionaries and evangelizing meddlers from a certain part of Christiandom," it is the zeal of Islam and inherent destructive nature of Hinduism that according to him found their most rabid expressions through the Mutiny. This in turn provoked the otherwise secular Christians to retaliate and rediscover anew the inherent virtues of Christianity that makes them a superior race and a conquering nation. As the rebels took up arms amidst shouts of "deen and dhurrum," it swelled the hero's "tough English heart [with] the glorious enthusiasm of a crusader, a knight of old, fighting for Christian women and helpless children against infidels and savage heathens – the enemies alike of God, of humanity, and innocence" (Grant II 48; 59). For Grant's readers this was not an uprising against *Sarkar, Sahukar, Zamindar* [government, moneylender, landlord], or the unholy nexus between colonial regime and bourgeois compradors, but a religious war. And Grant's novel is one amongst many that articulated the same sentiments.

It is important to note that by 1865, when Grant's novel was published, the idea of the Mutiny as a religious war was deeply etched in the imperial cultural consciousness and collective memory. This is most intriguing since Government accounts claimed otherwise. As

early as 1859, Viceroy Canning in his official statement to the Board of Controls wrote categorically that the rebellion was governed by political motives:

> Nothing is more extraordinary in all this than the different character which the revolt has assumed at different stages. At first nine-tenths of the discontented men were honestly afraid for their caste (many are so still) and became disaffected for no other reason. So far it was Hindoo movement. Advantage was taken of the state of feeling by Brahmins on religious pretences, and by others for political motives (of this I have not a doubt now) and the disaffection was fomented and spread. Now there is curious and concurrent evidence from different quarters that 26 Regiments have bound themselves together against the Government, and that some outbreak was meditated by them. But it cannot have been such an outbreak as has now occurred, and which for a time took the shape of a caricature revival of the Mahomedan empire. This phase of the affairs is, I believe due simply to the fact that the men of the Regiment which was so grossly mismanaged at Meerut and those who suffered punishment, were chiefly Mahomedans, and that Delhi unguarded by a single European was close at hand. These men of course carried with them those whose sympathies had been provoked in their favour by the mode in which they were dealt with. […] Now the rebellion has lost all destructive character. It is not more Mussulman than Hindoo. The ranks of the rebels are swelled from day to day by mutineers and deserters, but all accounts from above Agra agree that the outrages are committed more by the ill-conditioned Goojur population and other scoundrel's than by the mutineers (IOR H/M 726 223-233; 230-233).

It is easy to infer from the official papers that both the Government in India and the Board of Controls in London were well aware that religion was not the only driving force behind the

uprisings.[245] What's more, the administration almost openly admits that the Mutiny was a product of socio-economic reasons directly related to the Company's oppressive rule.[246] Nonetheless, the imaginary of the rebels as religious reactionaries form the mainstay of much of imperial writing including Charles Ball's *History of the Indian Mutiny*, the sermons of Reverend Spurgeon, and Dickens's letter to Angela Burdett Coutts where he called for the total annihilation of the rebellious natives. These and Grant's novel illustrate the fundamental ideological structure of the Indian Mutiny in imperial cultural consciousness: "I know it was a political uprising, but still …"

Grant's novel is also interesting because it offers significant pointers for studying the subsequent developments of the idea of the rebel as a religious fanatic within Western discourse. Central among these is Grant's mapping or fusing of the pre-Mutiny problem of the Thugee with the insurrection. The rebels in the novel are not only mutineers driven by Islamic zeal and/or Hindu bigotry, but they are also thuggies. Rebel leaders like Baboo Bulli Sing, Gunga Rai "the naked [Hindu] Fakir," and sepoys Pershad Sing and Shumshooden Khan are "members of that nearly, but not quite exterminated society [of Thugs], which was so long the terror of Hindostan" (Grant I 208).

Thugs were members of a religious cult called Thugee who killed unwary travelers by strangling them to death. This they considered a righteous duty divined by the decree of Kali, the

[245] I should clarify myself here by stating that I am not arguing at all that the uprisings did not have a religious face to it. It surely did and I will explore it more thoroughly when I discuss some of the sepoy documents later in this paper. But it surely was not the only governing force. This point too will become clearer when I take up for discussion some of the sepoy proclamations later in the paper. The elision of the other agencies and a prejudiced outlook fails to consider these more important socio-economic reasons. 'Religion' like the cartridges discussed in my chapter 1 thus becomes 'overdetermined' in the Althusserian sense of the term.

[246] The British press at most times censored or suppressed these reports. However, one such report leaked out and was subsequently mentioned in the vernacular Urdu newspaper *Jam-i- Jumsheed* ('bowl or glass through which to see the world'), published without the knowledge of the English press at Meerut. See, *FSUP*, V.1.409-410. Rajat Kanta Ray also cites this news item in his *Felt Community* 363-64. A similar kind of event, as described in the *Jam-i- Jumsheed*, was presented in the recent Indian film on 1857 *The Rising* (2007).

Hindu goddess of death and destruction. By dispatching souls to the nether world, they believed that they were doing the Goddesses bidding by relieving poor souls from their material entrapment in this world. The Thugees provided a serious law and order problem to the British colonial government and Colonel Sleeman spent almost his entire career trying to control the Thugs. He finally succeeded in suppressing the practice in the 1830s.[247] Grant fuses this pre-1857 anxiety provoking moment with the Mutiny in his novel. Gunga Rai, a former Thug and chief instigator of Mutiny in the novel declares, "the rule of the Company, will soon die, and with it the last of the Christians […] Jews, Fire-worshippers and Armenians" (ibid. 216).

Grant's mapping of Thugism onto the rebellion performs three critical ideological functions. First, like many of the mutiny narratives to come in the next hundred and fifty years, Grant's novel fuses an earlier moment of colonial anxiety with the present – the anxiety about Thugee as a law and order problem with the subversive Uprising of the native army.[248] Second, by characterizing the rebels as Thugs, Grant represents the rebels as more vicious and bloodthirsty. These people, Grant implies, were not only blinded by their corrupt religious practices in rebelling against the colonial rule but were also seeking to exact revenge for the government's censure of Thugism, which had left them "poor, crushed, and degraded" (Grant I: 212). The association of the rebels with Thugism thereby not only gave depth to the imaginary of

[247] Apart from Sleeman's own writings about the cult and its practices, the best fictional account is Philip Meadow Taylor's *Confessions of a Thug* (1839). Parama Roy amongst others in recent years has written on the Thugee and its relation to colonial imaginations about India in her *Indian Traffic* (See, 41-70). Recent arguments suggest that Thugee and its representations in British writings may have been a product of deliberate or ignorant misidentification on the part of the British about Indian cultural and/or religious practices. Martine van Woerkens in her *The Strangled Traveler: Colonial Imaginings and the Thugs of India* notes, the Thugee was primarily a product of British anxieties about the unknowability of Indian landscape and populations. In all possibilities, as Mike Dash argues in his *Thug: The True Story of India's Murderous Cult* , the administration conflated highway gangs and organized robberies with a theory of the cult.

[248] Jenny Sharpe, Nancy Paxton, Patrick Brantlinger, and Priti Joshi have noted similar examples of fusing in novels as diverse as *Lady Audley's Secret*, *A Passage to India*, and Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet*. To give a couple of examples, in mutiny novels the 'Well of Kanpur,' a site of massacre during the Mutiny, is often combined with the memory of the Black Hole. Similarly, in Forster's *Passage to India* anxious memories about the Mutiny are evoked following Adela's experience in the Marabar Caves and during the turbulent trial of Aziz. See, Brantlinger *Rule* 222-224.

the rebel as a religious decadent, but also functioned to re-present rebel discontent with colonial rule as dissatisfaction with reformative steps taken by the government to curb religious practices like Sati, human sacrifice, etc. In other words, the Uprising is a re-presented as a rebellion against principles of progress, enlightenment, civilization, and liberal culture. In effect, sympathies for the rebels, if any at all, are reduced to being sympathizing with the devil and anti-civilizational forces. The Rebellion is pathologized; the culture of the Other is ossified into an unchangeable morass that refuses to acknowledge the benefits of Western civilization and resists outgrowing their abominable religio-cultural practices. As reverend Spurgeon declared while supporting "earth demanded and God sanctioned" retributive justice against the rebels: "If it be any man's religion to meet me in the street, as the Thugs do, and garrote me and murder me, I will not tolerate his Thugism […] And such is the religion of the Hindoos" (Spurgeon 4-5). The believers of this "mass of rankest filth," Spurgeon said, should be sent immediately to their Gods (ibid. 4). As discourse, then, the rebel as fanatic lends credence to the ideological procedure of distancing the subaltern for preservation of an asymmetric system of power to be shared by the colonizer and the native comprador class.

Paradoxically, this gesture of nominating the mutiny as inspired by outlandish religious beliefs serves to radically undermine narrative security and imperial sovereignty. As we have seen, during and after the Mutiny, many, like Kaye, pondered about the possible causes of the uprising. Kaye asked how the otherwise obedient and child-like sepoy army could suddenly rise in open rebellion against officers they revered as parents.[249] Were they always like this but undetected? And how could the administration fail to discern any signs of discontent in spite of being aware of insidious activities like the circulation of *chapattis* by the natives? Grant offers an answer in his novel. He theorizes the Mutiny as a Thugee conspiracy. The reintroduction of

[249] See my discussion of Kaye in Chapter 1 above.

Thugism into a colonial imaginary already beset by the suddenness of Mutiny and seeking desperately to unravel possible causes behind it, functions, historically, therefore, to remind the readers, that like the Mutiny, Thugism too had remained undetected for a long while. And even after its suppression it has managed to remain in existence, waiting for the most opportune moment to surface again. And in the general atmosphere of petty discontents, the Thugs conspired to start a general rebellion against the Christian government of India. As the Thugee-rebel leader in Grant's novel says: "the rule of the Company, will soon die, and with it the last of the Christians […] Jews, Fire-worshippers and Armenians" (Grant I: 216).[250] But this theory also bears the burden of criticizing the failure of the colonial state to anticipate subversive activities in the colony – a point most vocally announced by John Kaye in his 3 volume *History of the Sepoy War in India*. "It was, indeed, strange," Grant writes, "that, [even] after an intimate intercourse with India for nearly two hundred years, the British [were] in perfect ignorance of the existence of a secret society […] of the Thugs" (Grant I: 239).

Like Grant, there were others who believed in conspiracy theories. Reverend Cave-Brown believed that the Mutiny was the work of "Mahommedan intriguers" with help from the Shah of Persia and the ruler of Afghanistan, while Frederick P. Gibbon's in his 1904 novel *The Disputed V.C.* identified a global Wahabi ideology at work (Brown 302-303). The answer to the question why did the sepoys rebel was therefore not simply religion, but a well-spun religious conspiracy to override British and Christian civilization throughout the globe. This nineteenth-century anxiety about an Asiatic religious conspiracy to overthrow the progressive interests of the West can be easily discerned in our contemporary political concerns as well.

[250] Recall here for instance the words of the Thugee-priest in Steven Spielberg's 1984 blockbuster *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*: "The British in India will be slaughtered, then we will over run the Muslims, then the Hebrew God will fall, then the Christian God will be cast down and forgotten. Soon Kali Ma will rule the world."

Though a digression, it is interesting to note that though the specific association of the rebels with Thugs is not common in nineteenth-century British mutiny fictions, Grant's text anticipates a trend that subsequently evolves in a very different cultural paradigm – Hollywood cinema! In 'western' cinematic representations of colonial Uprisings – *Gunga Din* (1939), *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984) and *The Deceivers* (1988) – mutineers against British rule are also Thugs. While in *The Deceivers*, a local chieftain dispossessed by British rule is revealed as a Thug, in *Gunga Din*, Thugs are at the heart of a rebellion against the imperial rule. Though the representation of this rebellion of the Thugs in *Gunga Din* under a charismatic Hindu leader is definitely much more sensitive to the nationalist movement that was going on in India during the 1930s, it nonetheless embodies strong feelings against the religious nature of the rebel army. But perhaps the most uncompromising picture of religious bigotry and Hindu/Thugee villainy is found in Steven Spielberg's 1984 blockbuster *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. In this film, the American archeologist hero, Indiana Jones investigates and frustrates a Thugee plot hatched by the Oxford educated prime minister and the royal priest of a small princely state in British India to convert the whole world to the ways of the Thugee. The priest says in the film, "The British in India will be slaughtered, then we will over run the Muslims, then the Hebrew God will fall, then the Christian God will be cast down and forgotten. Soon Kali Ma will rule the world." The similarity between this vision and that of Gunga Rai's in Grant's novel are too similar to be ignored. Like the novel all the three films suggest, that Thugees somehow survived British repression and were clandestinely planning to wage a large-scale offensive against British interests throughout the subcontinent, and possibly beyond. The idea of a fanatic religious war being raged against the Christians is present in 'western' discourses for characterizing the dogmatist and racist nature of the Indian rebel and subject. And

this imaginary continues well into the post-9/11 world as the *Clash of the Worlds* documentary shows only too well.[251]

The Crusade of Fifty-seven

James Grant was not the only writer to suggest the Uprising was a religious war launched against the Christian West by the followers of fundamentalist Islam and bigotry ridden cohorts of Hinduism. In countless novels, first person narratives, official, and personal correspondences amongst other documents the same idea reverberates strongly. In the 'Narrative of Events: Connected with the Outbreak in 1857, which fell under the observation of Major Williams, in the Meerut Division,' G.W. Williams, Commissioner of Military Police, N.W.P. Mirzapore, writes the Sepoys are "at open war with our race and religion." He calls them a menace engaged in a "crusade against Europeans" (Williams 'Narrative' 737-743; 950). Similarly, in a letter to his mother, Neville Chamberlain writes following the recovery of Delhi by the English troops in September,

> [t]he hand of God has been visible throughout, and but for His aid the victory must have been to the mutineers and rebels, for humanely speaking they had everything in their favour. For my own part, I never had any doubt as to the result, feeling assured that truth (Christianity) and civilization must triumph over falsehood and barbarism (IOR: MSS EUR C 203/1).

The most vocal representations of the 'mutiny' as a religious war, of course, are found in the sermons preached throughout England during 1857-58.[252] In the service at the Crystal Palace on

[251] I discuss the representations of Indian Mutiny in Western film in greater detail in my 'The Indian Mutiny in Hollywood Imaginary.' [unpublished].

[252] See for e.g., see *The Indian Mutiny: A Fact in Providence.* A Sermon. Preached at Christ Church, Old Kent Road, On the Fast Day, 7 October 1857 by Rev. R.P. Hutchison. *The Indian Mutiny. Two Sermons*. Preached on the 16 and 30 August, 1857, titled 'On the Dangers and Duties of the Present Crisis' by Rev. J.J. Halcombe; *The Fast-Day Sermons. The "Indian Mutiny:" Twelve Sermons, delivered on Wednesday, Oct 7th, 1857*; *The Service at Crystal Palace*, sermon preached by Rev. C.H. Spurgeon on Wednesday 7 October, 1857. In the service at the Crystal

7 October 1857, Reverend Spurgeon declared, "I do not believe that the Indian war is a war at all, in the proper sense of the term" for it is waged by non-humans against humans (Spurgeon 4). Reverend Daniel Moore in his sermon called native religions "unauthorized human theology," and the rebellion as "powers of darkness let lose upon us now" (*Fast Day* 103; 106). Reverend Canon Stowell went a step ahead demanding the immediate Christianization of the entire subcontinent as "a noble revenge […] for her present outrages upon England" (ibid. 147).

By far the most descriptive account of sepoy bigotry and "Mohammedan" intrigue comes from Rev. Cave-Brown's *The Punjab and Delhi in 1857: Being a Narrative of the Measures by which the Punjab was Saved and Delhi Recovered During the Indian Mutiny*. In this he writes, "various measures [taken by the government], some wise and necessary, others unnecessary and unwise" were purposefully manipulated and distorted by "Mohammedan intriguers" so as to appear as deliberate attacks on the caste and religion of the superstitious Hindu sepoys of the Bengal Army (Brown 302-303).[253] He explains that reform measures passed by the legislation were "prompted by, and indicative of, a large progressive spirit of benevolence, of a Government seeking but [only] the moral and social amelioration of its subjects; yet these were regarded as more systematic and more authoritative attacks on their religion" (ibid. 303). Cave-Brown also offers the most general template for post-mutiny opinions about the rebels and the rebellion when he writes:

> The abolition of Suttee, a demoniacal practice under which the more enlightened of the natives themselves groaned; – the endeavour to suppress infanticide, that blight and bane

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Palace on 7 October 1857, reverend Spurgeon declared, for example, "I do not believe that the Indian war is a war at all, in the proper sense of the term" and pronounced the punishing of Sepoys as "earth demanded and God sanctioned" (4). Reverend Daniel Moore called native religions as "unauthorized human theology" and the rebellion as "powers of darkness let lose upon us now" (*The Fast-Day Sermons* 103, 106); while, reverend Canon Stowell called for the immediate Christianization of the entire subcontinent as "a noble revenge […] for her present outrages upon England" (ibid. 147).

[253] Caste, Cave-Brown tells his readers, is the same thing as religion.

> of every Rajpoot home; the re-marriage of Hindoo widows, as an escape from what too often proved a lifelong widowhood of sin and shame ; these measures, so disinterested in their object, were regarded by the natives themselves with suspicion – grave suspicion – as unjustifiable interference with caste, with its fancied duties and rights; as so many cautious steps towards the ultimate overthrow of all the creeds of India, and the compulsory conversion of all classes to Christianity.
>
> Now it may seem incredible to an Englishman unacquainted with India, that an idea so vague and so baseless should for one moment have entered, much less have so powerfully moved, the mind of a whole nation. Christianity and its civilisation cannot fully appreciate such a form of superstition, with its bigotry and barbarism; but the experience of the last few years has given overwhelming proof that such a state of things *is possible* [sic].
>
> It has left us a complex problem to solve, and many a varied lesson to learn. It has uttered a warning voice to legislators, and to those who have to administer and to carry out the fruits of legislation; to those into whose hands England commits the destinies of her Indian army; to those who have chosen India as the field for private enterprise, and also to those who, regarding Christianity not only as a blessing and a privilege for themselves, but also as a trust committed to them for the good of others (ibid. 303-304).

Cave-Brown surmises: it was in this atmosphere of superstition and treachery, the "Mahommedan thought 'the good time [was] coming' when a blow might be struck for the supremacy of his race and religion, and for the extirpation of the infidel" (ibid. 129). For Cave-Brown, as with many others, Hindu superstition was played upon by Islamic fanatics with the hope of reclaiming Muslim rule all over the subcontinent through *jihad* against the Christians.

This view dominated British consciousness and cultural imaginary even as late as the 1880s and 90s. In narratives from the turn of the century, as in John Maclean's *The Rane*, for example, we read vivid descriptions of rebel fanaticism and Islamic treachery –

> Loud cries of 'Deen, Deen,' and 'Kill the Kaffirs,' filled the air in all directions, and… the ill-fated [English] party were marched off outside the city […] On arrival there a sawar or mounted trooper […] came up in hot haste and exclaimed, – […] the 'Faringee lague are to be killed' [and] at once commenced the work of slaughter […] The ladies, the gentlemen, and the children were then stabbed and cut to pieces by the infuriated and blood-thirsty mob, which in several instances vented its rage and hatred, by hellish acts of cruelty almost unheard of, seizing helpless infants and children by the limbs, and – even before their mothers' eyes – dashing out their brains against the stone wall surrounding the garden where the massacre took place (Maclean *The Rane* 227-229).

Similarly, in Frederick P. Gibbon's 1904 mutiny novel *The Disputed V.C.*, fanatic 'Wahabis' urge common people to attack and massacre the English "with shouts of 'Din, Din, Allah Akbar!'" (Gibbon 70); and in John Masters' *Night Runners of Bengal*, published in 1951, to cite a much later example, blood-curling cries of "Din! Din!" rends the air as the British are slain *en masse* by the sepoys (Masters 201).

In writings about 1857, subaltern consciousness is always buried under the 'din' of a secular liberal clamor against religious fanaticism. In George Forrest's *A History of the Indian Mutiny* (1904) we find the most definitive attempt at associating the oft reported war-cry of the mutineers distinctively with Islam. In a footnote appended to a description of sepoy's chanting 'Deen, Deen,' Forrest spells out: "Deen – correctly Din. Religion, Faith, especially the Mohamedan religion" (41n). Even when one encounters a slightly more attuned appreciation of

the event, as in Russell's *Diary*, there too the image of the rebel as a religious bigot is ever present. Russell was one of the few to identify in the rebellion "some national promptings."

> Here we had not only a servile war and a sort of Jacquerie combined, but we had a war of religion, a war of race, and a war of revenge, of hope, *of some national promptings* to shake off the yoke of a stranger, and to re-establish the full powers of native chiefs, and the full sway of native religions (Russell 29) [emphasis mine].

For Russell, who saw firsthand the excesses and slights of the colonial regime towards the colonized masses, the rebellion was not a simple mutiny of sepoys. Still Russell believes if the sepoys were successful they would have pushed India back in time, re-establishing the "full powers of native chiefs, and the full sway of native religions." Throughout British and Indian writings on the Mutiny, we see only variations of the same discourse: the subaltern is a religious fanatic bereft of consciousness.

The Colonial Communion

Like Russell, another Cambridge alumnus Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of India, was of the opinion that though the Mutiny was "popular" and "a war of Indian independence," it lacked "nationalist feeling" since "Nationalism of a *modern type* was yet to come" (*Discovery*). Nehru was voicing what had been the dominant opinion of the national elite as we have seen in earlier chapters. But of course, in contrast to the monolithic enunciation of subaltern religiosity in imperial discourses, Indian versions are complex to say the least. I cannot go into all the details but let me recount and delineate a few interesting features.

19th and 20th century Indian discourses most generally dismiss and distance the rebellion as an aberration, characterizing the rebels as regressive. 19th Indian bourgeois narratives such as Girish Ghosh's *Chandra,* Upendra Mitra's *Nana Saheb*, Soshee Dutt's English novel *Shunkur*,

and Rabindranath Tagore's "Durasha," as I show above, condemn rebel actions as immoral, thereby securing by contrast a distinct idea of bourgeois individuality and a Victorian-Brahminical national imaginary. English educated bourgeois heroes, like Ghosh's Somnath, join the rebellion only to withdraw and recant their decision later. Somnath, it should be noted, is a nationalist and desires the withdrawal of British rule from the subcontinent. But while the sepoys are ready to extend this desire to its ethical edge by physically exterminating *all* forms of alien rule, Somnath as the representative of the colonial bourgeois finds himself morally constrained. Somnath's refusal to execute European civilians, churches, and schools drives a wedge within the subaltern's revolutionary ideology. His critique of rebel actions against civilian Europeans as immoral functions to condemn the subaltern-rebel as bereft of consciousness, their actions as lacking any pragmatic social or political vision. One witnesses the pervasive hold of this idea thereafter in Nehru's *Discovery of India* as much as in Tagore's essay on the Rani of Jhansi where he calls rebellion as "*ayatha*" or a futile waste of energy. Similar condemnation of rebel action is also seen in Savarkar's banned quasi-historical *The Indian War of Independence* (1909), G.D. Khosla's *The Last Mughal* (1967) and Malgonkar's *The Devil's Wind* (1972).

In the last decade or so, however, there has been an interesting and subtle shift in Indian opinions about the rebellion. I discuss this shift in some detail in my conclusion/epilogue. For the moment it has to be mentioned that in contemporary Indian popular and political discourses the event has become the *first* "war of national Independence." Ideological reasons aside, this transformation of the Rebellion in the Indian imaginary from an object of derision and/or anxiety to an object of pride points to an interesting logical movement that parallels the ideological shift of the nation state from Nehruvian socialism to globalization. I cannot help but note the significance of Lacan's *logical times* for explaining the phenomenon. The transformation of the Mutiny, schematically put, follows a distinct psycho-temporal pattern. First, an event of

catastrophic proportions happens for which there seems to be hardly any reason. Second, the event is represented in discourse as an object of derision, as the handiwork of religious fanatics, as in both 19th century British and Indian bourgeois nationalist discourses. In this, the Mutiny is a phobic object; it is the abject that must be distanced in both imperial and Indian writings. It retains the status of a phobic object even in contemporary British cultural imaginary. However in the context of 21st century India there is a third stage: the abjection is probed and revealed to contain the origins of the Indian nation, albeit in inchoate nebulous terms. In globalized India, the Mutiny transforms into a fetish object. A quick look at press reports, new media, and blog entries explain this fetishistic character of 1857 – 'yes I know it was violent and brutal but all the same it was the first war of national independence.' And like most cases of fetishism it comes with self-serving aggression, aggression as a defense against elements inconducive to the image of the postglobalized Indian – "I do not care if you say otherwise, it was the first war of Indian Independence." Or, I do not want to know if the sepoys were religious, I do not really care about their consciousness … Such disavowal is no less problematic than the 19th century view of the rebel as a fanatic since either way the question of rebel consciousness is sidelined.

The rigid determine of religion as the mainstay of subaltern-rebel consciousness in nineteenth century imperial records and Indian bourgeois writings scripts the event in continuity with a history that preserves and perpetuates the sovereign subjectivity of the West against the regressive alterity of the Other. Slavoj Zizek's gloss on Totalitarianism applies well here. Religion in elite narratives, "Far from being an effective theoretical concept" functions as a "kind of stop-gap." Instead of "enabling us to think" and "acquire" new insights into the "historical reality it describes," it relieves us of the "duty to think" and "even actively prevents us from thinking" (Zizek *Totalitarianism* 3). The path towards explaining the 'historical reality'

of the Mutiny, truthfully, then, lies only through the question of rebel consciousness – what did the rebels want? What was the role of religion, if any, in subaltern-rebel consciousness? And, was fifty-seven a united movement bound by "some" nationalist promptings? Assuredly, the question of what sustained the image of the Mutiny (and its leaders) as religious and regressive in the collective memory and imagination must be studied in a broader context, since the phenomenon is not restricted to the events of 1857 only. It continues to unfold even today as certain groups of people and their cultures are designated as violent and oppressive. The answer, therefore, requires investigation and research into the functioning modalities of capitalism, but that unfortunately is beyond the scope of my present research. I will instead concentrate on the specific context, the Indian Mutiny of 1857, with the hope that it will yield pointers for a subsequent study of the broader spectrum.

III

Fifty-seven and the Subaltern: A Note

Unfortunately, not much attention has been devoted to studying the marginalized and repressed voices of fifty-seven. (This is true except perhaps for the work done by the Subaltern Studies Collective and some postcolonial scholars. I will return to discussing these shortly). I hope to develop in this section a study of the 'event' as represented by the 'mutineers' – the subaltern. I call these articulations subaltern 'voices,' borrowing Spivak's term in all its complexity and siding with Eric Stokes's argument regarding the flippant line dividing the sepoy from the peasant, to argue that though general scholarship has concentrated mostly on studying writings of post-mutiny English educated *nouveau intellectuels*, the nationalist representation of the event and memory for gaining an understanding of the Mutiny distinct from imperial sources, a substantial record of very different viewpoints made by a completely different gentry exists in

form of 'Royal Army' proclamations, 'rebel' pamphlets, folk songs, and depositions (including '*bazaar* talk') collected by British officials after the Mutiny. I prefer to use 'subaltern voices' instead of simply 'subaltern' since, in my opinion, what has remained characteristically are only voices – fragmentary, conflicting, differing, diverging from one another, most often collected and translated by British historians or mediated through individual/collective memories. I, therefore, cannot attribute to these the agency of representing a single identifiable body – the subaltern rebel. Instead, I prefer to read them as *disembodied* voices, whose functional agency is not dependent on identifiable cognitive sources. Rather, their floating, non-corporeal presence within the archive, history, memory, and experience ruptures both British imperial écriture and Indian bourgeois narratives of the event by proposing completely different sets of arguments.

I must clarify that I am not suggesting the 'subaltern can speak' or that it speaks through fragmented bits and pieces, rather, I am insisting that these remnants within the archives, the institutions of the exclusionary imperial hegemony, can function as *archaic traits* of an erased voice or voices. That is, these voices remain as archi-écriture for scholars attempting to re-apprise the events of 1857 freed from Anglo-centric or nationalist bias. As écriture, hence symbolic structures, these are not merely historical records, but templates for analyzing the imaginary of the subaltern. They offer a picture of subaltern demands and desires as articulated through the act of the 'mutiny.' The subaltern's demand/desire is circumscribed by the logic of the dominant; hence these only serve to decenter and further silence the subaltern. However when read qua the act, these ground the subaltern in its distinct logico-temporal position that is irreducible to dominant structures of thinking and interpretation. 'Act' here is therefore used in contrast to the 'event' as a narrative historical phenomenon for emphasizing the psychological agency of the 'mutiny' in relation to Anglo-Indian colonial relations, imperialism, nationalism,

and market economy. The subaltern's 'act' enacts a rupture in the dominant making the narrative dislocation of the act necessary. Act, to be understood in its plurality, as a distinct series of acts without any singularity connecting these or determining the character of the series, when reduced through narrative transforms into an event; a singular moment. This has been the function of British and Indian bourgeoisie writings and representations. No, the subaltern cannot speak … it can only act, rupture, enact a cut – it is always an excess. The 'cut' is predicated on a desire to radically resymbolize a crisis space, but its real effect resides in its disruption of authority and hegemony. The desire to change is open to dominant reinterpretation, analysis, and over-writing, the effect resulting is only deducible as enigma. Either way, the subaltern does not speak. My desire to excavate subaltern voices therefore is not to listen to these, but through these in order to discover the dynamics of the act that has so severely affected dominant imaginaries.

IV

Did Somebody Say Religion? Beyond *Deen, Dhurrum, & Qaum*

One always carries the risk of imposing dominant structures of thought on subaltern consciousnesses in investigating the latter. For instance, any explanation of *deen* derived from its theorization within dominant consciousness, and an ensuing reading of the subaltern's articulations on basis of that same source, tacitly presupposes the absence of subaltern consciousness. That is not so say the subaltern's use of the word is completely independent of the dominant consciousness. Rather, as Partha Chatterjee notes in his essay 'Caste and Subaltern Consciousness,' the subaltern position and consciousness share a dependent yet autonomous relationship with dominant discourses. One cannot emphasize this point enough in context of the sepoy-peasant subaltern consciousness of 1857. For, if, *deen* means religion and Islam at that too, as Forrest's footnote suggests, adumbrating thereby fixed exclusive notions of practices,

norms, and disciplinary adherence, then it fails to appreciate the culturally pluralized use of the word by the rebels of 1857.[254] As Chatterjee explains, while arguing against Dumont's synthetic notion of *dharma* as structuring the caste system of India, universalist notions about the Other expunge the transformative character of diverse cultural environments and the autonomy of subaltern consciousness (Chatterjee 'Caste' 182-186). The resulting effect is clearly illustrated in Rajat Kanta Ray's discussion of the arrest and execution of the Gond chief Raja Shankar Shah during the Uprising on charges of mutiny and conspiracy to kill the British (Ray *Felt Community* 353n2; 468n2). The evidence: a Hindi prayer containing the word '*deen*' and translated by W.C. Erskine as 'religion.' In actuality, the word in the poem was used in its Sanskrit sense meaning 'poor' or 'meek,' and the poem was not an incitement to rebellion but a prayer to God to look after the poor in times of crisis (*FSUP* III: 136-137).

Reading *deen* as rooted in Islamic consciousness and applying only to followers of Islam, consequently, convolute the agency of this (in)famous rebellious war-cry of the 1857 rebels. For, as rebel documents show, the rebels were not only addressing Muslims but also the Hindus through the calls of '*deen*' and '*dhurrum*' to unite in a war against the British.[255] The most common proclamations, whether issued by the rebel army or by religious leaders like Liaqat Ali or by the royal courts of Lucknow and Delhi, begin the address by calling "all Hindoos and Mahommedans of Hindoostan"[256] to a "war"[257] for protecting their "lives and faith" against "the treachery" perpetrated by the British "on the people of Hindoostan" (*FSUP* I: 443-444). As Rajat

[254] The notion of religion as fixed can be found in the etymology of the word itself. In Middle English 'religioun,' Old French 'religion,' as well as Latin 'religio,' perhaps from religāre, the meaning is to tie fast, hold firmly, binding.
[255] The Royal Army proclamation reads – "The Royal Army addresses its brethren in faith throughout India, Hindoos as well as Mussulmans". Also, "In India there are two tribes Hindoo and Mussulman." See, 'Advice of the Royal Army' in IOR/H/727; 487-733; 489; 527.
[256] 'Proclamation Issued by Mirza Feroz Shah Shahzadah', in *FSUP* I: 459-460. Feroz Shah calls the people as "Hindoostanee Brethren," (ibid. 460).
[257] The *sawars* of the rebellious 3rd Cavalry of Meerut supposedly told the townsfolk – "[…] this war is in the cause of religion […]", in the Deposition of Harnam Singh, Meerut Mahajan. Qtd. in Ray *Felt Community* 474n26.

Kanta Ray notes, "English translations indiscriminately render '*dharma*' and '*deen*' as 'religion.' [However] the terms have wider connotation than religious creed […] fighting for *dharma* and *deen* is not simply fighting for one's religious creed, but defending the collective identity of the entire community of people" (Ray *Felt Community* 474n28). He is convinced that though lacking a modern sense of national identity, the rebel proclamations outline the constitution of a united and fraternal front comprised of the two main religious groups as their identity (ibid. 358). At the heart of this constitution is a covenant binding the Hindus with the Muslims against the British as "the common enemy of both" (*FSUP* I: 443). To ensure this, the proclamation states, "a solemn and compact agreement has been entered into by all the Mahommedan chiefs of Hindoostan, binding themselves, that if the Hindoos will come forward to slay the English, the Mahommedans will, from that very day put a stop to the slaughter of cows" (ibid. 443-444). What is absent in this union of two religious communities is a vision of secular living under a common national constitution, but the feeling, desire, and intuition to work out a common minimal program for unifying against alien misrule is not. Far from being driven by religious intolerance, proclamations such as this show a keen understanding of morals and ethics of real-politik informing rebel consciousness. Rebel documents illustrate that not only was there a 'felt' and 'imagined' sense of belonging but also a working theory for achieving it – a two-fold common minimal program stressing the expulsion of the common enemy and the drawing out of a contract in writing for uniting the principal religious communities against the enemy.

The 'Advice of the Royal Army' in this context is a most illustrative source.[258] It justifies the rebellion by setting up allegations and accusations against British rule through a detailed listing of moral, ethical, and ideological corruption of the foreign power. Starting with a

[258] Translated from Urdu into English by Syed Abdullah, the document was purportedly written by Syed Rungin Rakam under the supervision of Kishori Lal Lahori, on the 16 September, Tuesday, 1857. Here after ARA.

discussion on the initial success of British rule, it ascribes recent failures on part of the British to their willful violations of divine and moral precepts governing the relationship between the ruler and the ruled. A highly evolved notion of social contract between the ruler and the ruled, and a covenant between the ruler and God, is at the heart of this critique of British administration. The cardinal sin on the part of British, according to the proclamation, was their indiscriminate breaking of promises: "[gradually] their intentions were altered, they grew boastful, arrogant and presumptuous. And seeing that no King remained powerful enough to cope with them, they commenced breaking their promises" (ARA 491-493). And in "consequence of their over-bearing conduct and ingratitude" the English lost the divine munificence it enjoyed in the earlier stages of their rule (ARA 577). The proclamation lists three major causes for initial British success in India: (1) "They were true to their promises and engagements;" (2) "They did much service by construction of roads and earned the gratitude of travelers by ensuring their safety;" and (3) "In administering justice they showed no partiality to members of their own tribe" (ARA 491). Listing British degeneration, the writers mention four points: (1) pride; (2) lust; (3) bigotry; and, (4) dissipation (ARA 577). Because of these four "sins" the British forfeited their contract with the ruled and violated their covenant with God – a covenant that requires the ruler to offer his selfless service to the people he rules. The ARA specifically identifies a slew of haughty and arrogant policies implemented by the Company as constituting a violation of their promise to the people and God – the increase of taxes, unethical professional practices involving racial and religious discrimination, insensitive judicial and prison reforms in complete apathy of traditional native beliefs and customs, and, not any less importantly, the attempt to convert the Hindus and Muslims through educational and religious institutional systems into Christians (ARA 493; 501-503). It is important to note, that all four, and not just religion, are documented as "instances"

showcasing the Company's breaking of the moral and ethical engagement with the native multitude, and as bearing witness to the changed intentions of the British in India.

Characterizing the British administration as a "petticoat government," the proclamation criticizes, for example, the government's decision to make court appearances by women mandatory. The rule, it states, is an affront to the dignity of "the females of Indian households" who stay in the *zenana* (ARA 497). On first reading, rebel concern about the women stepping out of the home and into courts appears as unfounded illiberal fear rooted in the oppressive religious practice of confining women to the *zenana*. On a close reading, however, we find the objection is more about a social problem posed by the law and less about women appearing at the courts. The writer's complain that the regulations making court appearances for *pardanasheen* women mandatory was being taken advantage of by many for harassing innocent people. The innocent, often unwilling to let their women appear in public were settling matters by either accepting the charges or by making payments to the accusers for taking back the case. While some cases were genuine, the ARA notes, many were false and presented only with the aim of fleecing men desirous of protecting their privacy than contesting the case (ARA 507). Similarly, in discussing the unjust annexation of Oudh, the writers do not merely express a discontent over the act as rash, but argue it out as politically falling in pattern with common British behavior. They cite past examples, when the British had similarly violated treaties with other sovereign kingdoms, to draw attention towards the violent intentions of the Company; intentions oriented towards nothing but self-aggrandizement (ARA 515; 571). These and other like citations in the ARA establish the central claim of its writers, namely the Company was in violation of the moral laws. This, the ARA asserts, makes it incumbent on the part of the aggrieved to seek the downfall of the Company. For "people follow the religion [implying way or path here] of their king is an old

Arabic proverb [and] When the rulers do not themselves abstain from evil, then the ryots [farmers; tenants] must be expected to follow the example [or] resist to death" (ARA 537-539).

All this is not to say that religion or the fear of losing religion did not figure prominently in rebel consciousness. The ARA openly states, "In India there are two tribes Hindoos and Mussulaman and neither of them feel disposed to embrace Christianity. Each is determined to uphold his respected faith or die" (ARA 527). But that the attack is not directed against Christianity *par se*, but the way British officials were in following their religious beliefs leading to endless misery of the native populations. The example cited in the ARA to establish this point is interesting, since it sheds light on rebel/subaltern consciousness of gender as well. Forced conversions by Missionaries, the writers note, made it a convention for the wife to convert, even if unwilling, with the husband. The wives and children of the forced converts had no other way but to accept the man's religion. Since, there was no way to continue living under the same roof with a convert and retain one's own religion, and since leaving the husband was doubly sinful, the wives had no choice but to accept Christianity (ARA 541). If dominant views usually stay away from addressing the issue of gender in subaltern consciousness, and given that the rebels of 1857 were mostly represented as oppressors of women, this argument opens up the distinct possibility of noting the complex and multi-layered nature of rebel perception. Indeed, as Chatterjee claims following Gramsci, autonomous consciousness of the subordinate classes emerges at moments of class conflict. And as it [the subaltern] assumes the position of "an historical person," usurping the prerogative of the dominant in a moment of turmoil, it takes shape of an agency that is "necessarily active and [charged with] initiative," thereby subverting dominant knowledge, history, and theorizations (Chatterjee 'Caste' 171).

It is in these inversions of dominant discourses that the agency of subalterneity must be re-discovered. It is not merely a question of positional effect but of affect engendered as a result of the position's assumption and/or expressions of a certain agency. That is, its materialization within dominant discourses as an enigma, usually corroborated by its concurrent tacit endorsements and disruptions of dominant discourses. In other words, the subaltern is a thing refusing seamless narrativization. For if, the rebel expresses sensitivity towards gender positions in society, they, nonetheless, also return to religion in order to seek support against the established structures of hegemony:

> We poor people are their servants and they are superiors and Lords. How can we overcome them [?] At last having despaired of our lives and placing reliance upon our Creator, we pronounce '*Bismillah*' (I commence in the name of God) and seize upon our swords (ARA 547).

How is it possible then to approach a consciousness that is splintered and wavering?

I feel compelled to return here to Chatterjee's study on 'caste and subaltern consciousness' and Ray's work on 'nations before nationalism' as 'felt communities.' Both offer valuable pointers that help us understand how religion could have functioned in the consciousness of the rebels. Ray, faced with a similar question, reasons that conceptually

> the Mutiny is a peculiarly difficult phenomenon […] a war of races that was not a race war because the subject race conceived it as a war of religion; a religious war that cannot be called truly and purely a war of religion because what was being opposed was not the creed of the master race but their political domination; as such, then neither a war of race, nor a war of religion, but a patriotic war of Hindu-Muslim brotherhood, or the inchoate social nationality of Hindustan; yet not a national war either. It was all these things and

> therefore none of them: the product of a mentality rooted in the past, yet forced to reckon with the dynamic world of the nineteenth century (Ray *Felt Community* 357-358).

And exactly how does one arrive at the point regarding the Janus faced character of the Mutiny? That it was rooted in the past while looking expectantly to draw from the present in order to secure a future controlled neither by the British nor by the old feudal orders.[259] Chatterjee's reading of the relation between dominant and subordinate consciousnesses via Gramsci assumes critical significance in untying this knot. In 'Caste and Subaltern Consciousness,' Chatterjee notes the subaltern consciousness as "contradictory, fragmented, [and] held together in a more or less haphazard whole" by the mediation of "common sense" (Chatterjee 'Caste' 170). Common sense, used by Chatterjee in the sense Gramsci defines it, is "formed, and transformed, in the course of historical process" bringing "dominant and subordinate classes into relations with each other" (ibid.). Religion, in the context of this argument, is most peculiarly structured. "For the dominant groups it offers the necessary ideological justification for existing social divisions." In other words, for making dominant discourse appear "non-antagonistic" and thereby holding together "a potentially divided society into a single whole." In the case of the subordinate, religion affords "access to a more powerful cultural order" (ibid. 172).

Following this, we can argue that for the colonizer and the native elite, the outright denomination of the rebels as religiously motivated was the easiest way to club together the heterogeneous motley of rebels and their equally diverse causes for rebellion into one shell. Second, the over-determination of religion allowed the dominant powers to conceptualize and identify the enemy, historically and ideologically. If this enabled the Empire to successfully represent 1857 in discourse, it offered the bourgeois nationalists the principles for constructing

[259] Nehru had called the uprisings as lacking a strong sense of nationalism precisely because of its supposed revivalist tendencies. Nehru wrote in his *Discovery of India*, "There was hardly any national or unifying sentiment [but merely] anti-foreign feeling [and] a desire to maintain feudal privileges" (269).

their own exclusive national imaginary. To the subaltern rebels, in contrast, religion presented itself as a signifier with which to participate in an ongoing discourse between the colonizer and the native comprador class. Religion accorded them the possibility of conceptualizing a different cultural order, which was not simply traditional but also attuned to the demands of a changing world order. Eric Stokes points at this, in fact provides the cradle for the possibility of this argument, when in *The Peasant Armed* he conjoins the sepoy rebellion with peasant movements making them the one and same – "the peasantry formed the vital link between military mutiny and rural turbulence. In a real sense the revolt was *essentially the revolt of the peasant army* breaking loose from its foreign masters" (Stokes *Peasant Armed* 14) [emphasis mine]. But as Ray correctly notes, it was not as simple as that. The sepoys had acquired through the century a wider perspective of the world compared to their peasant brethren, and it was this perspective that they offered to the peasant movement along with their military skills in fifty-seven.[260] Evidence of an expansive sepoy perspective is seen in the 'Royal Army' proclamation. The writers, keen on enlisting as much participation as possible from the towns folk and peasantry, refer to the Santhal Rebellion of 1855-56. "The case of the Soutals," they write, "is a notorious example" for illuminating the atrocities of the British indigo planters on ryots and it is a most valuable example for taking lessons for organizing a unified rebellion against the British (ARA 635). The fact that the sepoys were not merely preaching off hand knowledge gathered through their experiences but also putting this knowledge to practice is borne out in a letter written by Major-General Hearsey to the Secretary, Government of India. In this letter, dated 11 February 1857, Hearsey reports to Birch about the growing number of curious incendiaries in his station.

[260] See, Ray, *Felt Community* 356. This is, perhaps, most clearly borne out in the refusal of the rebel regiments to relinquish their regimental colors and standards. Some even marched to battle with the Union Jack flying high in front. And certainly the whole scenario must have completely flabbergasted the British counter-insurgency columns – to watch rebelling sepoys march with the regimental standards amidst shouts of *deen* and *dhurrum* against the officers of the same regiment.

These incendiaries were reported throughout India in the months before the Mutiny. Hearsey writes, "burning of the telegraph bungalow and several officer's thatched houses had occurred at this station [Barrackpur], – certainly by incendiaries, for Sonthal arrows with lighted matches attached to them had been taken out of the thatch." This incident and similar "fires occurring at Raneegunge about the same period" led him to suspect that "the men of the 2nd Regiment" were responsible, since "Sonthal arrows had been used in igniting the bungalows, and that regiment had been employed in the Sonthal District" (qtd. in Forrest *Selections* I: 25-26). This official correspondence evidently suggests that the sepoys were not only using strategies learnt from their experiences as soldiers, but they were also passing these onto the other cantonments.[261]

The issue of subaltern consciousness can be further adumbrated through the argument that though "the reassertion of Mughal legitimacy" energized the "force and dynamism of a people who had risen in the mass," it is also recorded that the sepoys exercised control over the 'liberated' zones and kingdoms, as well as over the reinstated old feudal lords and kings, through their own councils (Ray *Felt Community* 357). The sepoys accepted the suzerainty of the reinstated princes with a caveat – the sepoys were in charge of military and, at times even, social administration of the liberated zones. This often led to friction between the sepoys and the aristocrats over their respective visions of the state, military operations, and the future. One interesting example is a letter written by the royal court of Delhi to Bakht Khan, the subedar-major of the famous Bareilly brigade and commander-in-chief of the rebel army in Delhi. Written by the royal members of the Military Council, it remonstrates Khan "in measured but decided" tone on the "impropriety" of not following Laws of military and political organization or "*Rajneet*." The letter states,

[261] Bhuvan Chandra Mukherjee (1842-1946), in his *Sipahi Bidroho Ba Mutiny* ('Sepoy Rebellion or Mutiny'), published by *Basumati* in 1314 [1907], openly attributed the incendiaries to the influence of the Santhals on the native regiments. Qtd. in Mitra 96.

> great tact and good policy is required to rear an infant kingdom, in as much as all kingdoms are conducted according to "*Rajneet*" (laws of government). The great Kings that have passed away laid down laws according to "*Rajneet*" and the Sovereigns of the present times are guided in their government thereby. You are well aware that the fortune of the English was bright like the sun. But they deviated from the "*Rajneet"* and determined to subvert the religion of all. You are now an eye witness of the punishment that has fallen on them. […] we are organizing a kingdom, and this can be accomplished only by managing the affairs according to *"Rajneet".* This is a broad fact which is known to all (*Mutiny Records, Correspondences, Part II* 117-119).

Undoubtedly, the letter was written to control Bakht Khan, possibly at the behest of the Mughal princes who lost command of the rebel army after the arrival of the former in Delhi. Ray narrates similar instances of face-offs between the royal courts and sepoy commanders, including reports of the sepoy army refusing to follow directives issued by the royal courts (See, Ray *Felt Community* 358-360).

In light of these, Ray contends that the Mutiny achieved a distinctive edge as soon as it was conceptualized as a movement jointly led by 'Hindus and Muslims' as the people of "Hindustan." Through this expression alone a "foetal nationality" was coined, which, according to Ray, later transposed itself into the idea of "the two religions govern." The slogan, "two religions govern," was famously used by the sepoys at Jhansi to counter the claims of the queen as the governor of Jhansi. The sepoys did not object to her occupying the throne and acting as a titular ruler of Jhansi. However, when it came to the question of making military and administrative decisions they insisted that their military council should prevail. It was "an implicit check upon the legitimate authority of the restored chiefs" (ibid. 358-359).

There is another very interesting facet illustrative of sepoy consciousness which no scholar or historian have noted till date – non-cooperation as a method of active resistance. The 'Royal Army' proclamation assures the people afraid of British military strength with the following words:

> Behold what happened at Cabool [Kabul]. The whole city united, no one would supply them with provisions […] no one would accept service under them: you ought to act in the same way, and those who are employed under them must resign their posts. Our religion strongly forbids our taking service under Christians. It is absolutely unlawful for us" (ARA 599-601).

Religion, needless to add, is at the heart of rebel conceptualization of non-cooperation and civil disobedience against British rule. The strategies of non-cooperation and civil disobedience, as well as the idea of setting up parallel governments in liberated zones, were borrowed from the preaching's of the Patna Wahabis who during the 1850s organized a *jihad* against the British government (Balkhi 16-18).[262] The rebels, Ray observes, were "incapable of generating a new world, imprisoned within a fragmented, timeworn cosmos, yet strenuously driven by circumstances to reorder the fragments into a different, unfamiliar constellation" loaned and borrowed ideas from all available sources. In effect, they built up a movement that "was at once a 'traditional resistance movement' and a movement unrecognizable to tradition" (Ray *Felt Community* 357- 359).

The arguments above however are not sufficient for explaining the issue of religion in the rebellion or the question of whether the Mutiny was a religious war. For indeed a large number of Proclamations and Pamphlets issued by the rebels, the royal princes, feudal warlords, and the

[262] The movement in India during the mid- nineteenth century that was termed 'Wahabi' by the British had actually little or no relation with the Wahabi movement in Najd. See, Balkhi *Wahabi Movement* and Jalal *Partisans of Allah*.

clerics called for a religious war or *jihad* against the 'occupying' forces of the East India Company. A number of leaders like Maulvi Ahmadullah Shah Faizabadi and Maula Faiz-i-Haq Khairabadi were self-proclaimed *jihadis* with notorious past records for fomenting communal disharmony.[263] It is also not surprising that Rohilkhand, where religious leaders like Mirza Mazhar Jan Janan preached *jihad* in the early decades of the nineteenth-century, was amongst the worst affected areas during 1857 (Haq 39-41).

Amongst the documents confiscated by British troops during the counter-insurgency campaigns is the famous pamphlet *Fateh-i-Islam* or 'Victory to Islam.'[264] British officers translated it as 'A Cry of *Jehad* in Oudh' and cited it widely to support their claim about Wahhabi and *Jihadi* involvement in the Mutiny (See, Jafri 240). Another document often cited to support the same is the Proclamation issued by prince Firoz Shah, commonly known as the *Firoz Shahi Proclamation*.[265] Based on these documents and others such as these, the authorities investigating the Mutiny argued that the events of fifty-seven had direct historical continuity with the *jihadi* movement started by Shah Waliuallah in the 18th century and continued thereafter by his son Shah Abdul Aziz. Connections between the Uprising and nineteenth-century jihadi movements launched by Syed Ahmed of Rae-Bareilly, who died in action at Balakot in 1831, and the Faraizi or 'state within a state' movement of Eastern Bengal, began by Nasir Ali or Titu Mir and thereafter led by Haji Shariatullah and Dudu Mian, were also made (Haq 50-54).[266] During the post-Mutiny period, a series of Wahhabi trials (1863-1872) and the publication of W.W. Hunter's *Our Indian Musalmans* contributed to the growth of the idea about the Mutiny as a Muslim conspiracy and religious war against Christians. As Jafri points out, this theory of

[263] For brief descriptions on Islamic *jihadists* and their works, see Haq 37-54.
[264] For a translation of the pamphlet see, Quraishi, [ed.] *Cry for Freedom* 113-125.
[265] For a translation of this text see, Quraishi, [ed.] *Cry for Freedom* 77-83.
[266] For the *jihad* led by Sayed Ahmad of Rae Bareilly in the 1830s against Sikhs and for the myth of Balakot, see Jalal 58-113.

historical origin of *jihad* in South Asia found a dominant place in British and bourgeois nationalist discourses on the Mutiny, and continues to do so even today (Jafri 253n2). It is important therefore to consider some of these 'inflammatory,' 'fire and sword' *jihadi* pamphlets for comprehending the exact nature of *jihadi* consciousness articulated through these and the situation of *jihad* within the subaltern consciousness of the Uprising we have discussed so far.

The *Fateh-i-Islam* was issued after Maulavi Ahmadullah Shah defeated British troops at the Battle of Chinhat on 30 June 1857. This victory catapulted him to the position of the most revered commander leading the rebel army in Oudh and there was talk of appointing him as the *amir* or leader in charge of both military and civil administration (Jafri 241).[267] Jafri contends that the *Fateh-i-Islam* was written and circulated by a group close to the Shah (ibid. 240). The main points in the document are as follows:

1) It details the various crimes committed by British rulers from "killing innocent men" to attempting to "deprive the troops of their religion by [applying] impure substance to the cartridges." It asks the Hindus and Muslims to unite in the "annihilation of these Christians" (Quraishi *Cry* 113-114).

2) Tyranny and oppression, it says, "renders the waging of a religious war at once with the execrable Christians one of our bounded duties, enjoined by the Prophet" (ibid. 114).

3) It discusses the logistical and *matériel* support required and available for this "religious war."

4) Most importantly, it emphasizes the need to elect a leader for waging this war and technicalities that the sepoy army should employ in their battles against the wily but "paralysed" British troops.

[267] Not much is known about this enigmatic leader but it is known that both British and Indians respected him equally for his military exploits and nobility of character and humanism. There are Urdu sources including a biography in verse written by a disciple and local zamindar, Fateh Mohamad Taib. This documents also has a section delineating the Shah's views on *jihad* and the role of the *mujaheddin* (Section 18, verse 1243-88). See, Jafri 239-40. The best English source on the Shah is Haq's *The Great Revolution of 1857*. See Haq 55-63.

This final point is repeated more often in the pamphlet than any other, including even the call for *jihad*. The need for a 'leader,' preferably a "holy leader," most specifically a "Koreshee," or in absence of one "any Mahomedan Chief endowed even with a few of the qualities of a leader and observing the tenets of the Mahomedan Law," is rooted in the ideology of *jihad* (ibid. 117-119). Only a 'holy leader' or one versed in Islamic *sharia* can 'bless' and inaugurate the war (ibid. 117). The other points elaborate the context and need for waging *jihad*. The long citation of British atrocities at the very beginning of the pamphlet function to identify the condition of the subcontinent as *Dar-ul-harb*; where peace and freedom, both political and religious, have been violated by the ruling powers. This therefore is a logical enticement to *jihad*. The pamphlet asserts that, it is the duty of both Muslims and Hindus to oppose practices that have turned their land from an 'abode of peace' to an 'abode of war.' However, *jihad* cannot be waged without proper preparation or without arming the *jihadi* forces with weapons equal to that of the *kaffirs*. This, the pamphlet says, has at last been achieved. "God be praised that the necessary material for the execution of the duty has through his assistance been now put in our possession, i.e. the guns etc. which are required for religious war and which formerly the people of Hindoostan stood in need of; these are, through the Divine favour, now in possession of Mahomedan Kings of Delhi and Lucknow" (ibid. 114). Therefore, there is no reason to delay, since "if they [British] succeed in re-establishing their authority, great misfortunes will befall all the Hindoos and Mahomedans, the people, the sepoys, the kings, and the Wuzeers" (ibid.).

From its thorough reasoning for undertaking *jihad* to its declaration of the Queen of England as an infidel, this document appears to be a foolproof call to *jihad*. In one place, it even preaches the use of *gazees* to "kill and pursue the unbelieving people as far as Calcutta" (ibid. 116). The English translation for *gazees* is given as 'fanatics.' The most common understanding

of *gazees* is that these are soldiers sworn to the faith (Islam) and ready to die protecting and preserving the faith. Though common sense would drive us to label such emotions as fanatical, I do not think the word and its current usage adequately explains the role of the *gazees* as soldiers of faith. Neither for that matter is the concept solely found in Islam. In the Hindu epic *Mahabharata*, we find the mention of '*Sanktapaks*,' soldiers who swore on the fire to not return from the battlefield till they had killed hero of the epic Arjuna or were themselves killed in the process of trying. The 'discrete charm' of these soldiers lies not in their fanaticism, but in the desire to deliver a message to the Other through action. Fanatics by contrast do not feel the need to convey such messages for they do not recognize the Other. Though the rhetoric of the pamphlet impresses upon the decrepit mind the *jihadi* fervor of its writers, I believe the continuous insistence on electing a religious leader says something different. There are at least two things at stake in the demand for selecting a holy leader and for continuing the war as a holy war. First, in context of the power-struggle between the Oudh aristocrats who wanted to elect Birjis Qadir, the minor son of the exiled Nawab of Lucknow, and the followers of Ahmadullah Shah who wanted the Maulavi to be declared the *amir*, the document should be read as an attempt to gain support for the Shah. This struggle between the court and the religious order over gaining power to decide on civil and military matters, as Ayesha Jalal writes in her *Partisans of Allah*, is as old as the establishment of Islamic rule in the subcontinent. This struggle between rulers, keen on maintaining temporal and territorial jurisprudence, and the Islamic clerics, stressing spiritual and *sharia* law, claims Jalal, defined the very structure of Islam and *jihad* in South Asia. The call to *jihad* in the pamphlet is therefore another subtext to this narrative of internal South Asian politics and reflects the attempt of the Shah's followers to control both the territorial and spiritual domains. A similar power struggle is observed in the letter cited above

between the Royal court of Delhi and the sepoy-general Bakht Khan. There the conflict was between the aristocratic Mughal court and the sepoy commander over practicalities of commanding *Rajneet*, though in reality it was an attempt to control the sepoy army.

This concern with the sepoy army is also present in the *Fateh-i-Islam*. One of the reasons for choosing a holy leader and waging a holy war, or better still rechristening the continuing war as a *jihad* and pursuing it in accordance to the ethics of Islamic law, appears to stem from an attempt to control and discipline the sepoy army. The pamphlet clearly states that plundering of property and murdering of innocent Europeans are not acceptable under any religion. It accuses the sepoys of perpetrating such heinous acts and thus responsible for the recent drawbacks faced by the army at the hands of the British. It states, "the sepoys are prohibited from plundering anyone […] don't destroy anyone else, but those, with whom you are at war" (Quraishi *Cry* 116-117). It justifies the appointment of a religious leader to lead the sepoys with the following words, "When a leader is to be appointed, all misfortunes will be at an end" (ibid. 122). Following Jalal's investigations on the evolution of *jihad* in South Asia during the colonial period, it can be said that this pamphlet proclaims a holy war not out of any fanatic desire to institute ethical principles of Islam in place of the British. Nor, for that matter, does it attempt to shape the rebellion into *jihad* according to a plan hatched in the preceding century by Shah Walliullah. Instead, *jihad* is prescribed for practical and temporally expedient uses of Islamic ethics, namely gaining control over internal court politics and the itinerant sepoys (Jalal 125). This proclamation does not convey the sense of rabid fanaticism that is usually associated with Islam and *Jihad*. *Jihad* here is not accentuated by spiritual principles or religious concerns, rather by temporal and political necessities, including politics between Islamic rulers and the clerics,

the politics of defeating the British forces, and the need to boost morals of the sepoy army and if required chastise them for their indiscipline.

It should be added that the pamphlet is a manual for undertaking guerilla warfare against scattered British forces and one of the few rebel documents to stress the need for invading the British capital, Calcutta. The call for the masses to undertake a religious war against the British was a temporal phenomenon and not a product of deep-seated Muslim conspiracy or a reflection of the inherent character of the "oriental" mind. The mutiny of the sepoys gave Ahmadullah and his followers the opportunity they needed to call for *jihad* against British rule and not the other way round. During his arrest in January 1857 for preaching *jihad* and planning an attack on a church in Lucknow, the Shah told a *kotwal* (native police officer), sent to ask him to give up his *jihad*, "Since you are also a Muslim and if you follow the *shari'at*, then *jihad* is obligatory even for you. Likewise, I consider *jihad* obligatory for me, but for the want of means (to carry on the struggle) I have not been able to undertake it. Otherwise I am quite ready for it" (cited in Jafri 246).[268] The Mutiny offered both the means and the context for pursuing *jihad* as well as for justifying its necessity to the masses. At the same time, as this particular document demonstrates, it was also the most expedient step to take in the wake of flagging morals and internal politics.

> The Proclamation issued by Feroz Shah at Bareilly on 18 February 1858 declares:
>
> the object in view [the war against the British] is purely of religious nature, therefore it is made known to all Hindoos and Mussulmans, that whoever is so fortunate to possess [the] Grace of God, he will join us in this religious war. After the receipt of this Proclamation, it is expected that all will join in the *Jahad* (Quraishi *Cry* 81).

[268] Shah was not arrested on this occasion but soon after. He was released from the Faizabad jail by the rebels. See *FSUP* II: 30-35.

Here again we witness the attempt to sanitize and discipline the continuing war through the introduction of Islamic ethical principles of 'civilized' warfare. "The delay that has occurred hitherto in expelling the English," it says, "has been caused by the will and order of the Providence, for the army mercilessly murdered women and children in violation of the orders of their Sirdars [Chiefs] and gave themselves up so much to plunder that they turned their victory into defeat." "Now," it commands, "having relinquished all these sinful acts and formed your minds for doing good, you should join in the *jahad* [*sic*] and you will obtain complete victory" (ibid. 82). The Proclamation balances the transcendental and material – "All should join in this religious war, not for the sake of world's goods, but in hopes of reaping the fruits of eternity [and] after gaining ascendancy and power, by the blessing of God, they will also get high situations in this world" (ibid. 81). Clearly religion was a strategic necessity to combat the span of the master's hegemony, rather than an otherworldly ontology that drives the rebellion in a fatalistic manner.

Some scholars argue on basis on new research that has focused on Urdu, Persian, Farsi, and Arabic texts that the connection made by the British between *jihad* as pursued during the rebellion and principles of *jihad* as delineated in Islam merely reflects the abject insensitivity of the English towards understanding the peculiar syncretic contexts of Indian socio-religious orders. Ayesha Jalal notes in her book that "[f]ew concepts have been subjected to more consistent distortion than the Arabic word *jihad* – whose literal meaning is 'striving for a worthy and ennobling cause' but which is commonly thought today to mean 'holy war' against non-Muslims" (Jalal 3; 7). Amaresh Misra believes that historical arguments identifying Shah Walliullah's call to *jihad* as the beginning point for *jihadi* activities in India overlook some crucial aspects in the Shah's revolutionary theory. These, Misra contends, distinguish Shah's

movement from any other *jihad* carried out anywhere in the world. The Shah, Misra notes, followed the steps of the seventeenth-century Indian thinker Pandit Jagannath in applying Ibn Khaldun's historical theories to the Indian context. By doing so, he "re-interpreted *jihad* as *Inquilab* (revolution)" which his followers later rephrased as the war for *azaadi* or freedom (Misra I xxxi). Jalal also describes how the unique context of South Asia, where Islam in spite of being the ruling religion enjoyed only a minority presence, forced the "dominant Sunni school of Hanafi law in the subcontinent" to develop accommodative tendencies for temporal and practical reasons of governance. The "Sufis and freethinking philosophers," writes Jalal, "contested the narrow interpretations of the Arab and Arab-influenced legists" in order to enunciate from within Islamic laws a "policy of peace for all" (Jalal 15). Moreover, Shah Walliullah "systematic theory of jihad" must be read in context of a historical anxiety over Muslim identity that was triggered in the eighteenth-century following the loss of Mughal sovereignty (ibid. 15-16). Misra argues that Walliullah made strategic adjustments to the theory of *jihad* in his writings. What concerned the Shah most was the decline of the Mughal Empire in India. Most interesting in this context is the fact that though Walliullah opposed the rise of Maratha Hindu sovereignty, yet he did not declare India as *Dar-ul-harb* when the Mughal emperor was forced to accept the protectorateship of the Maratha warlord, Madahji Scindia. Interesting is the timing of declaration of *jihad* by the followers of the Shah –1803 or the year British troops under Lord Lake defeated the Marathas and assumed the protectorateship of Delhi. Shah Abdul Aziz, the son of Shah Walliullah and his intellectual heir, proclaimed India as 'enemy territory' or *Dar-ul-harb*, thus justifying *jihad*, as soon as British troops entered the Red fort of Delhi. As Misra puts it, this "instance showcases India's composite culture where Shah Walliullah's followers, termed 'Islamic fundamentalists' by the British, did not regard Sanatan Dharmis [Hindu Marathas] as the 'other.' […] The

Mughal-Maratha alliance was considered natural" (Misra I xxxi; also, Haq 41-42). The *fatwa* issued at this instance clearly identifies the "Christian officers" as *kafirs*: "in administration and justice in matters of law and order, in the domain of trade finance and collection of revenue," "from here [Delhi] to Calcutta," "the Kafirs," "the Christians are in complete control." It charges the Company of ruthlessness and oppressing the "*dhimmi*[s]" or non-Muslim citizens of Islamic State (Misra I xxxi-xxxii).[269] "Shah Walliullah's movement," notes Misra, "dubbed Wahabi by the British, had nothing to do with the orthodox Middle East, Turkish and Persian trends. It was a quintessentially Indian movement of liberation [*azaadi*] fought when the East India Company was seen […] as an alien force bent upon re-engineering Indian society" (ibid. xxxii).

The 1857 rebellion was a *jihad* in the sense that it was a striving against an "undesirable opponent." It was a *jihad* against the British, an external enemy, as well as the base inner self, which had to be disciplined and uplifted in order to achieve victory against the external foe. It is not a *jihad* because it involved armed struggle, but it is *jihad* because it believed in achieving freedom from an enemy that was not only dismantling an existing social order, but also in the process forcefully burying the inner soul of the inhabitants of India into ignominy. The so-called *jihadist* documents say precisely that and preach against lowering one's self in front of alien tyranny.

[269] The *Fateh al-Mujahidin*, which was written on the instructions of Tipu Sultan also reflects a similar endeavor to wed the concept of *jihad* with a war of liberation against the British. See, Haq 47-48.

V

What does the Subaltern Want? Lacanian lessons of 1857

In the last two decades, explorations of subaltern consciousness have been done by the Subaltern Studies Collective; first under the auspices of Ranajit Guha and then in the direction of Spivak's deconstructive reading of subalterneity (Chatterjee 'Reflections' 81-86). Existent works on rebel consciousness are characteristically of the first phase, concerned with finding gestures of thought that can resituate the subaltern in the domain of history. In light of documents as those cited above, these have identified the presence of an embryonic political ideology in sepoy actions. The rebels, these historians tell us, used religion as a signifier for participating in an ongoing discourse between the colonizer and the native comprador class. Religion accorded them the possibility of conceptualizing a different cultural order, which was not simply traditional but also attuned to the demands of a changing world order. True the rebellious sepoys did not conceive of a secular nation founded on the principles of democratic governance as an alternative to British rule, but they also did not prescribe a return to 'Asiatic despotism' either – the specter of which haunted Europe all through the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries.[270] Or, as Ayesha Jalal observes, religion was invoked for strategic purposes like disciplining the rebel army. Religion did not serve to inspire the rebels with an otherworldly ontology. There is no arguing from the little that we have seen in the preceding section, some of these arguments do appear substantial. But again, these arguments are not independent of the systems of thought instituted by dominant discourses. These follow as an alternative what is already implicitly allowed by and present within the dominant discourse and its power structures.

[270] See, Grosrichard on how the specter of despotism structured French discourses on the East in the eighteenth century.

The tacit underpinning between postcolonial and colonial discourses about subaltern consciousness is over the fact that colonialism, as a product of historical procedure, could not have been avoided. Resulting derivations in face of this historical determinism take the form of, as in Ray's study of rebel 'mentality,' how history itself makes space for inchoate subaltern senses to emerge. In other words, the sepoy consciousness was a product of necessary conditions of colonial and capitalist history – they [the sepoys] 'gained' from their experience of serving in the Company's army. This logic of course is present in colonial discourses in form of notional justifications of colonialism as destined to ultimately benefit the native population by opening up their perspectives to the rational bliss of European Enlightenment. In a sense then, Ray's study appears to suggest that, the desire enunciated by the sepoys, and following them the oppressed masses of the subcontinent, are derived through colonialism. In reality, this idea of historical determinism merely corroborates the colonial theory about the Asiatic character.

One can however extend the argument further to support two distinct perspectives regarding subaltern consciousness – one, the confused structure of subaltern consciousness is the direct result of colonialism, and, second, the presence of subaltern consciousness in opposition to dominant consciousness is indicative of the failure of colonialism to comprehensively homogenize the Other.[271] These two points corroborate two governing though apparently different opinions about colonialism as a historically destined reality: (1) colonialism eventually benefits the colony; (2) the colony must be comprehensively controlled and disciplined with force for the benefits to materialize. Interestingly, these points were not beyond the pale of rebel knowledge. The Firoz Shah Proclamation states in an intensely sarcastic and ironical manner a fifteen point agenda decided upon by the "priests and sages" of England for reestablishing

[271] See, for example, Chatterjee's arguments on the intertwined character of subordinate discourse in 'Caste and Subaltern Consciousness.'

control. The resolution reached by the English, it suggests, demarcates the faults of the Company that led to the rebellion. Amongst these are protecting "the heirs and descendants of the former rulers instead of extirpating them," preservation of religious books when they should have been burnt, and most generally the failure to completely eradicate all marks of Hindu and Muslim culture and the erection of Christian and western monoliths over them. Such steps would have ensured the complete collapse of the Hindu-Muslim society and checked any subversive activities. If these measures are adopted as the Crown has planned, there will be no chance to unite ever again against the British, cautions the Proclamation (Quraishi *Cry* 78-79).

Similarly, if we consider that the metaphorization of the rebellion in dominant discourse as a religious war is aimed at what Zizek in his discussion of totalitarianism defines as the taming of "free radicals […] to help the social body to maintain its politico-ideological good health," then, the necessity for a project articulating and establishing the validity of subaltern consciousness ends up as another way for ameliorating the radical cut opened up by the rebellion within dominant consciousness (*Totalitarianism* 1). Therefore, in eking out a link in the process of 'discovering' subaltern consciousness between the act of the rebellion and elite historical imaginary, the vituperative radical agency of the rebellion is compromised. I am not suggesting that the work done by historians in accommodating an understanding of rebel consciousness is geared towards repositing, willy-nilly, dominant imaginaries of reason, liberalism, secularism etc. on the rebellion and its agents. But it is also not difficult to see just how this has happened in the past when scholars like Ray have attempted to adumbrate the distinct contours of rebel consciousness vis-à-vis their experiences within the colonial army. Colonialism, it appears, has become a fetish object for critics like Ray who say 'I know it is bad but still it exerted influence on forming the character of the subaltern sepoys.'

In Support of *Jihad*? Or, the Immoral-Ethical War of 1857

I want to therefore part ways from these readings about subaltern consciousness and introduce the point I made in my section '1857 and Subalterneity,' namely the subaltern is irreducible, outside of narrative. Let me elaborate.

Partha Chatterjee in a recent essay written on occasion of the twenty-fifth year celebrations of Gayatri Spivak's 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' details the shift that Spivak's work introduced into that of the Collective's. Chatterjee writes, "[c]ontrary to some commentators, I do not think we [the Subaltern Studies Collective] were so naïve then as to believe that by digging afresh into the archives we would be able to somehow recuperate the authentic voice of the subaltern. […] Our labor was mostly spent in reading from a fresh standpoint certain known texts from the colonial and nationalist archives. But our reading was guided by a search for a *distinctive structure of subaltern consciousness*" (Chatterjee 'Reflections' 83-84) [my emphasis]. In his introduction to the Bengali selections from the *Subaltern Studies*, Chatterjee described the fallacy of this early methodology:

> [Is it] necessary […] to clothe the subaltern in the costume of the sovereign subject and put him on stage as the maker of history? Subaltern historiography had in fact challenged the very idea that there had to be a sovereign subject of history possessing an integral consciousness. Why bring back the same idea into subaltern history? It is only a myth that the subaltern could directly speak through the writings of the historian. In fact, the historian was only representing the subaltern on the pages of history" (qtd. in 'Reflections' 83).

Unfortunately, what we have in as examinations of rebel consciousness are attempts to relocate the subaltern as a sovereign subject. Readings that stress that the subaltern's articulation

of religion was complex and disclose the rebels as round characters and not flat incarnations of everything evil, pits the sepoy as an Everyman figure. Such characterization is infused with a romantic vision of the subaltern as a tragic character struggling to make sense of his world. That is, the subaltern-rebel as "incapable of generating a new world" being "imprisoned within a fragmented, timeworn cosmos," yet as "strenuously" struggling to reorder "fragments into a different, unfamiliar constellation." Sensitive as it is, this perception reinscribes the subaltern-rebel within an essentially European humanist vision. I want to stress, on the contrary, the sheer irreducibility of the subaltern's act as consciousness – I am averse to the idea of reproducing the subaltern-rebel as human through the intervention of my distinctive class, social, and ideological position. I suggest, for purposes of beginning to unravel subaltern consciousness, we part not only from the work done by the Collective but also from that of Zizek's, especially the latter's reading of religion as a stopgap. We *now* need to reintroduce religion in our dialogue, restoring it precisely as what it is for us, i.e., a stopgap. Such a gesture should prevent us from thinking and probing the sepoy too deeply, thus preserving the subaltern free from all kinds of romanticization. For it is hypocritical to analyze the subaltern-rebel and attempt to engage in dialogue with his consciousness when his own revolutionary ideology is dismissive of the possibility of such dialogues. The subaltern-rebel of fifty-seven had only one thing to say: *maro firanghi ko* – Kill the White Man![272]

What is the idea that I am trying to press here: that the ideological position of the subaltern cannot be addressed without acknowledging the figure of the rebel as a deeply religious person. The subaltern-rebel is not lacking ideological consciousness because he hacks 3-month-

[272] I want to clarify that in critiquing Ray et al I am not seeking to discount either their mode of study or the value there in of formulating an archive of subaltern consciousness. Rather, I intend to point out the risks studies done by Ray carry insofar as their findings are open to co-option by the dominant ideology to reconstruct 1857 again, as before, in a completely timid way – its radicalism being expunged and filtered for the representative needs of the present.

old babies to death. He is ideological because he tries to legitimize this violence through proclamations that chart British oppression, on the one hand, and chastise murdering of innocents, on the other. Let me take this a step further and say that instead of dissociating the rebel as religious from the rebel as striving to ideologize his position, it is even better to search for rebel ideological consciousness in and through the subaltern's religious flair. Consider for example, the rebel call to achieve victory or die trying. The Royal Army Proclamation inspires the rebels to wage all-out war by telling them:

> from henceforth the choice is between life or death. For if (which God forbid) the English should become victorious they will not let you escape alive. You will either have to become Christians or be hanged" (ARA 549).

At the heart of the call to 'die or achieve victory' is a forceful realization that British retaliation in the wake of a failure would be severe. As the writers of the Royal Army proclamation caution: "all our Mussulman and Hindu brethren are warned, that from henceforth the choice is between life or death. For if (which God forbid) the English should become victorious they will not let you escape alive. You will either have to become Christians or be hanged" (ARA 549). But there is also no denying the explicit presence of rebel religiosity in these lines. It evokes the frightful image of the *gazee* or one who is committed to die for his faith and religion. But the incentives of martyrdom and paradise are present in the Proclamation only as secondary conceptualizations. Instead, what drives the *gazee* of 1857 is a problematic choice and resultant anxiety surfacing from that choice. The desperation in the lines unravels the dilemma of being caught in a forced-choice and consequently opens up subaltern-rebel consciousness and ideology. Like the famous

Lacanian maxim 'your life or your money,' the sepoys are caught between being Christians or die resisting (*Four Fundamentals* 212-213).[273]

Why is this choice problematic? Why is it an example of forced-choice? Moreover, why is this not simply proof of rebel religiosity? Because, as Sumit Sarkar observes, the rebels could build "notions of confederal unity" such as 'Hindus and Muslims of Hindustan' without disturbing the "hierarchized internal structures of communities" and their respective moral universes. But conversion to Christianity implied a thorough dismantling of their existent symbolic order and the horror of enduring a new, alien, and unreal symbolic order (Sarkar 364). Sarkar draws his argument from data presented by Ray of a conversation between a Muslim nobleman, a Collector's *chaprasi*, a *jamadar*, and a native Christian in Bijnaur weeks before the Mutiny (ibid. 364n13). It is important to cite this conversation in full.

The story cited by Ray is from archival documents. It was reported as part of a deposition given at Meerut by the native Christian Francis Chester to Major G.W. Williams after the Mutiny.

> [A] Nawab commenced the conversation by observing that two regiments to the eastward had taken their discharge, because the Kafirs had mixed pigs' and cows' fat with the new cartridges [sic], that the Kafirs had determined to take away the castes of all Mahomedans and Hindoos, and that these infidels should not be allowed to remain in India, or *there would be no difference* between Mahomedans and Hindoos, and *whatever they said, we should have to do* (FSUP I: 301) [emphasis mine].

[273] Consider for example the following from the 'Proclamation Issued by Hindoos and Mahomedans assembled at Delhi': "If our faith be preserved we have everything. If otherwise, it is preferable to die than live" (Quraishi *Cry for Freedom* 106). Or, as Jalal quotes from another pamphlet, "'Consider yourself dead even before death' was the rebel exhortation to the Royal Army of Delhi" (qtd. in Jalal 124). She clarifies that this has no relation to the conception of *fana* or annihilation in the Creation, rather it suggests physical death, one the soldiers are sure to face if captured by the British or if the rebellion fails.

Sarkar's reading of this passage is simple, "Anti-foreign unity was necessary precisely to preserve differences of religion and caste" (*Writing* 364-365, n13). Ray's gloss, however, is more perceptive and relevant to my discussion, since it identifies an unconscious drive at work in the nawab's concern about the British scheme of erasing differences between Hindus and Muslims (*Felt Community* 373). This is not a one off example. The Firoz Shah Proclamation warns that the new (Queen's) government is bent on intermarrying their "daughters" with "natives of rank" so that "in a few years they would have *all become one*" (Quraishi *Cry* 78). Anxiety in the *Firoz Shahi Proclamation*, as with the story cited by Ray and Sarkar, is evidently with 'all becoming one,' i.e., the complete erasure of Hindu and Muslim cultures, religion, and ethnic identities. Anxiety is over the complete "loss of […] identity" as a result of "differences of their [existing] social system" being erased (Ray 376). It is an anxiety over the destruction of an old symbolic order founded around the differenced coexistence of Hindus and Muslims (and, Jews, Armenians, Iranians, Pathans, Topazes etc.) by the intrusion of British colonialism. Anxiety here is with 'all becoming one.'

If anything, the 'choice' between converting and rebelling, then, is not a simple choice. For if one chooses life then one loses, through conversion, the treasured symbolic order; and, if, one chooses Christianity, it is not a life worth living since everything associated with the differenced symbolic order of Muslims and Hindus come crashing down towards a horrifying sameness – a placid world of oneness. Anxiety over this dissolution then is the very fulcrum organizing the desperate resistance against the debilitating conditions forced by colonialism on the colonized masses. In psychoanalytic terms, it is a resistance against the condition of castration demanded by Law. But we can translate this in the political-colonial context as a resistance against historical determinism of an alien logic that is forced upon the colonized

people by colonialism *a la* capitalism. It is, therefore, a rebellion against the alienating conditions of colonialism in both Lacanian and Marxist sense of the term. For is this not what Lacan points at when discussing anxiety: the erasure of difference, the loss of the symbolic order, and a horrific coagulation with the Other as One? Is this also not the central precept of all radical revolutions: to resist hegemonic homogenization, resist being reduced to puppets, when '*whatever they say, we should have to do*' becomes or threatens to become a reality? And does it not, then, open up through the subaltern consciousness the space for representing what colonialism is all about and what should be done to resist it? The ethical duty of the colonized is to resist colonization and its stakes or die trying. In other words, to eradicate and decimate all vestiges of colonial rule, institutions, power structures, and systems of thought.

Conclusion

It is this ethical desire and duty enunciated by the subaltern that ruptures the imaginary of the colonizer and established discourses of colonialism as an 'Enlightenment sanctioned' enterprise/burden to discipline the 'savage.' Paradoxically, if we follow Lacan, this moment as a moment defining the intractable structural alienation of the colonized and explicating the essential (in the Aristotelian sense) distance between the colonizer and the colonized masses is also the instant for symbolizing the lack engendered by colonialism. It opens up the haunting lack between the ruler and the ruled thus offering an opportunity for the rulers to symbolize or suture the lack and appease discontent. The subject in alienation, as Lacan argues in Seminar XI, is also the subject who discovers what it lacks and in the process of symbolizing it moves into the second phase, or separation, which entails a 'naming' and satisfaction of the lack. Naming or symbolization as a result of separation, or as resulting from separation, produces the fantasmic support for the subject in form of the *objet a*, which reproduces the erstwhile demanding subject

as a desiring subject. In other words, the dialectical structure of desire invades the colonial symbolic order in the aftermath of a rebellion leading the colonizer to offer reconciliation and the colonized to compromise on its ethical demand for complete retraction of colonial rule by accepting the reconciliatory package. A point not altogether lost on the so-called bigoted and rustic rebels. One Proclamation clearly warns: "Should the enemies of your religion at this time endeavour to win over or proclaim a reconciliation their promises are unworthy of reliance and are altogether deceptive. Let no one sacrifice his life by falling into their snares" (Quraishi *Cry* 107). (The *objet petit a* is also regarded as a lure or snare by Lacan, something which traps the subject in the desire of the Other, thus forcing it to acknowledge its symbolic debt. It is indeed fascinating that the subaltern not only reveals the causes behind the Other's anxiety but also exposes the Other's ideological gestures so well.)

The colonial space of post-Mutiny nineteenth century India, however, makes a direct application of the above theory problematic. Since, though the demand enunciated by the subaltern in 1857 was hijacked and transformed into a desire for independence and nation by the national bourgeois, the subaltern was left out of this new space and desire. Instead, various native bourgeois associations like the British India Association and the Indian National Congress were formed as legitimate sites for articulating this desire. The rebels of 1857, the rank and file of 'Hindus and Muslims of Hindustan,' were by-passed with British support and a bourgeois nationalist imaginary was produced in place of the rebellious demand as *the* cultivated desire for the nation; a nation that was to be achieved through 'civilized' negotiations with the British and not mass armed confrontation.[274] The loss which was articulated through subaltern demand and

[274] The militant nationalist movement that began in Bengal, Maharashtra, and Punjab in the twentieth century never quite earned mass support as Gandhi did. Tragedy is these groups also failed to join hands with the peasantry and peasant rebellions. Most of the times, these were clandestine groups with few members and suicidal plans that never materialized into concrete acts of revolution. Yet instances of heroic struggle abound. The two most concentrated

consciousness was reformulated to fit the modes of civilized exchange within the exclusive communion of the colonizer and the native compradors. It is little surprising then that the repressed event has returned today in India, this time to be celebrated albeit through ideological filtration with all radicalisms attached to the memory of the event, when religious conservatism has also established a strong social and political presence in the subcontinent.[275] Consequently, over the years, the voices of the rebels have been so successfully buried that it has taken a lot of digging to unearth even a few remnants. Unfortunately, it has not been the same with British cultural imagination and collective memory – where the vicious demand made by the rebels has stayed *real* all this while.[276] It is there, in the very heart of British imagination, where the clamor and din of the mutiny is still thronging, that we must search for the self and consciousness of that self – a self that is always alienated, always belonging truthfully in the domain of the Other, and articulating desire in relation to the Other.

Finally then the question of singularity: British attempts have focused around historically and epistemically containing the radical cut enunciated by the Uprising, a procedure similar to drawing imaginary circles around the gap or *faille* articulated as result of the Mutiny within British discourses, authority, knowledge, and imaginary. But this has failed to contain the cut; it

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efforts at armed movement in the twentieth century were the Indian Naval Mutiny of 1945, scuttled by the British with ample assistance from the Indian National Congress, and the Indian National Army, formed out of Indian POWs in axis camps, and led by the charismatic Subhas Chandra Bose. The rallying call for the INA was '*Chalo Delhi!*' or 'Onto Delhi!' which Subhas, popularly known as Netaji or the Commander, had sworn on the tomb of Bahadur Shah II in Rangoon, Burma. The INA also had a women's wing, 'The Rani of Jhansi' brigade. The INA was handed over the Andaman Islands by the Japanese. Later they marched into British occupied Indian territories, when they set foot at Imphal, now in NE India. By the time of India's and Pakistan's independence, however, the British policies had succeeded in forcing the masses to internalize their aggressions and dissent and these the masses turned onto each other in what is perhaps the most overlooked State created act of civil war perpetrated by a retracting imperial power – the Partition of India and communal riots.

[275] I am, of course, thinking here of the rise of BJP and Sangh Parivar. But more recent events like pogroms against Muslims in Gujrat, or, against Christians in Karnataka and Orissa; movements demanding expulsion of non-Marathis from Maharashtra; and fatwas being issued against Indian Muslims for taking part in Hindu religious celebrations, have become daily news.

[276] See, for example, 'Soldiers' Visit to Indian Mutiny Sites causes Row.' For 'Indian' reaction to this, see, 'Arrests after Indian Mutiny Graves Smashed' and 'India Pushes Graveyard Tourism.'

has remained as haunting, demarcated as such by the circling signifiers, rupturing and announcing its subversive agency by compromising British historicization and representations of the event. Time and again, the Mutiny has fractured British authority and identity by announcing itself through diverse and various agencies – sometimes in form of objects, sometimes through innocuous gatherings like that at Jalianwalabagh, and sometimes through militant actions reviving memories of the rebellion. In cultural texts, the symptoms of this anxiety are ever-present – from anxiety over *chapattis* to anxieties about a rising in the wake of Aziz's trial in Forster's *A Passage to India*. Similarly, real Uprisings in Sudan and Middle East, Africa and Afghanistan during the years of the Raj and after have only added to this anxiety. In recent years, events like 9/11 and global terrorism have rekindled this anxiety over a rebellion that threatens to upstage the West and its political and cultural hold over the rest of the world. Post-colonial India has, however, succeeded in plugging this gap with the imaginary of communal unity and national liberation – an imaginary derived and influenced by the Western anxieties over subaltern dissent and present-day Eastern anxieties about belonging to the 'right' side of the geo-political divide. In this dialectical play of desires, the event has remained, as always, a singular event – provoking, evoking, eliciting, abetting, and then again stirring up anxieties about the *Ghadar* or the Indian Mutiny of 1857.

EPILOGUE

The Phobic and the Fetish Object: Indian Mutiny Today.

The rebellion of 1857 has been incorporated as a fetish object to support a postglobalized Indian imaginary – an imaginary ridden with an 'anxiety of belonging.' In the recent sesquicentennial celebrations of 1857 in popular discourse as well as in the official acknowledgement of the Uprising as the 'first war of Indian independence' by the Indian Parliament, what was all this while a phobic object has transformed into a fetish object *par excellence*. In contrast, the event still haunts the cultural imaginary of the West as a phobic object.

As I mention above, Lacan's essay on the *logical times* allows a good explanation of these phenomena. To repeat: the transformation of the Mutiny, schematically put, follows a distinct psycho-temporal pattern. First, an event of catastrophic proportions happens for which there seems to be hardly any excuse, but one that was destined to have happened given the untold oppressions of the colonial rule and/or the failure of the Company to doggedly pursue its pogrom of establishing stringent hegemony. Second, the event is represented in discourse as an object of derision in both British and bourgeois nationalist discourses. Insofar as the event causes panic it is a phobic object in these discourses. It is the abject that must be distanced in. Finally, in the Indian context, the abjection is probed and revealed to contain the origins of the Indian nation, albeit in inchoate nebulous terms, but nonetheless it is the 'one.' The Parliament, the Communist parties, the moderates, and conservatives all join the celebrations and popular media determines it as such.

Historian and author of *Awadh in Revolt 1857-1858*, Rudrangshu Mukherjee raises the most obvious question in this context:

> Today, as the celebrations begin to mark the 150th anniversary of the rebellion, some questions need to be asked: is 1857 an occasion to celebrate? Can the Indian state uphold the violence that is inextricably linked to that year? Can the Indian state say that it is loyal to the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence, and in the same breath celebrate 1857 when so many innocent people, on both sides, were brutally killed? ('Kill').

Indeed, it beggars the imagination to think how one can possibly align the violent uprising of 1857 with the dominant imaginary of the Indian nation founded around Gandhian non-violent movement. Better still, how can anyone understand the reasons for the 'secular' Congress party[277] and the Indian communists[278] rallying round the celebrations alongside the right-wing parties such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Sangh Parivar, who have always represented the event as a *cause cèlébre* of Hindu nationalism?[279] How does one compare the commemoration of an essentially violent conflict as the originary signifier for the nation's birth with the recent claims by the Indian foreign minister while responding to concerns of some members of the IAEA regarding India's demand for nuclear technology, as a demand that should be reviewed in context of India's history as a peaceful nation? India's non-violent past as the proof of its commitment to "non-proliferation" (India's Nonproliferation, India Committed). A quick look at new media, blog entries specifically, explain the fetishistic character of 1857 – 'yes I know it was violent and brutal episode in Indian history but all the same it was the first war of national independence.' And like most fethistic cases it comes with self-serving aggression,

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[277] For comments by the Indian Prime Minister, Man Mohan Singh, on the occasion of the 150th celebrations as a "shining example of national unity," see, 'Indians mark Revolt Anniversary.'
[278] See, *People's Democracy*, vol. xxxiii, no. 21. Also, *People's Democracy*, vol. xxxi, no. 19.
[279] The protests against the commemoration of 1857 as the 'first war of Indian independence' are equally interesting. The then Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha, Charanjit Singh Atwal, claimed the Anglo-Sikh War of 1845 as the 'first'. See, '1857 Anniversary.' Historians from the 'south' challenged this view unsuccessfully in the court seeking instead to call the 1806 Vellore rebellion as the first. See, Mutiah.

aggression as a defense against elements inconducive to the ego or self-image of the postglobalized Indian – "I do not care if you say otherwise, it was the first war of Indian Independence."

It is as a united mass movement containing germs of national unity and nationalist feelings that all political parties and the 'masses' commemorated the celebrations in 2007. However, in reality the Mutiny was far from this. The 'uprisings' were geographically contained to northern and central regions of India; national sensibility was always over-determined by references to *deen* and *dharma*; a national geo-political consciousness when present was always inversely ascertained [as in the correspondences with the Nepal Darbar] (Ray *Felt Community* 382-383; *FSUP* II: 444-449); and, lastly, the religious unity of Hindus and Muslims was contractual excluding the Christians, including Indian converts, the Sikhs, Parsis, Armenians, Bengalees and others. The fact that the Uprising enjoys today the status of a fantastic fetish object for securing the imaginary of a nation in tune with the demands of postglobalized world order is best amplified through the transmogrified representations of the event in the Indian film *The Rising*.[280] I do not have the scope to discuss this point or the film in detail here. For the moment, let me just point out that not only does the film attempt to represent the Uprising as nationally conscious, and Mangal Pandey as the ideological *avant-garde* frustrating feudal visions of reestablishing monarchial power in the wake of British expulsion, it also overwrites concerns such as the role of religion to allow a picture of 1857 which is in tune with the present day fetishistic appreciation of the event.

[280] I discuss the film in detail elsewhere. For the moment it is enough to point out that not only does it attempt to represent the Uprising as nationally conscious and Mangal Pandey as the ideological *avant-garde* frustrating feudal visions of reestablishing monarchial power in the wake of British expulsion, it also attempts to overwrite other concerns including the role of religion to offer a picture of 1857 which is in tune with the present day fetishistic appreciation of the event. For instance, Pandey's castist concerns are not hidden, but addressed from the auspices of comedy attenuating thereby audience response to a scene where, for example, Pandey tirades a low caste for touching him.

In comparison, the 1857 `emeute in the collective memory and cultural imagination of the 'West' has remained as a phobic object – being still referred to as the 'mutiny' in England (*Clash of the Worlds*). In a way, it can be claimed that the pressures influencing the conversion of the event in India is directly, if unconsciously, related to the retention of 1857 as an instance of Eastern cruelty by the West. For in the postglobalized, post 9/11 world, where anxiety over *belonging* to the 'right' side of the divide has become crucial for economic and political reasons, the Western gaze and its judgment of the Uprising explains the urgent need for reconstructing a national history distant from fundamentalist violence.[281] But the lingering anxiety over the event in Western consciousness can perhaps further an understanding of the agency of the Uprising in relation to what the Mutiny really is. The Mutiny is a cut; and only if we acknowledge it as such can we appraise subaltern agency freed from any risk of cooption by dominant ideology. For as phobic object, the event retains a much more palpable relation to subaltern agency, thus giving us an opportunity for approaching subaltern consciousness at its most radical, intractable, but authentic dimension. The issue of rebel consciousness is inextricably tied up with the singularity of the event or what makes the event singular, i.e., the impossibility to define it.

[281] I have studied this anxious desire for *belonging* as expressed through Indian popular culture in my article 'Globalization and the Cultural Imaginary: Constructions of Subjectivity, Freedom, & Enjoyment in Popular Indian Cinema' [under review].

APPENDIX

Reading Bhabha, Reading Lacan: Towards a Theory of Colonial Anxiety.

Introduction

This appendix in the true nature of an appendage is a surplus. It presents a theoretical discussion on anxiety as an epiphenomenon of colonialism. My purpose is to offer a hypothesis regarding the anamorphic relationship between anxiety and colonialism. Anxiety inhabits the cultural discourses of colonialism as a haunting, affectively deconstructing representation and ideologies through incessant disruptions of the architecture of the colonial symbolic order. Anxiety, I argue, encodes the colonial experiential space at a structural level, resulting from and affecting both material and epistemic practices of colonialism. Focusing on discussions about anxiety in Freud and Lacan, on the one hand, and Homi Bhabha's writings on the circulation of anxiety in colonial discourse, on the other, I will attempt to contextualize the theoretical focus of my dissertation by arguing that the Uprising *stages* the essentially anxiety-ridden dynamics of colonial relations, practice, and structure.

Anxiety about the inscrutable native Other informs much of colonial discourse. Consequently, it should not be left out of critical investigations of colonialism. If the issue of power and knowledge is critical to the exposition of colonialism's ideological mechanisms, then noting the agency of anxiety as informing the repeated attempts at authorization of discourses within the colonial space is equally important for understanding how anxiety over the instability of power/knowledge shapes the practice of colonialism. For instance, the impossibility of sustaining mastery over the Other, which the repetitive returns to and reconstructions of ideologies for establishing a seamless hegemonic colonial regime symptomatically disclose, necessitates *our* returning to anxiety as a primary player responsible for the (de)constructions of

colonial discourse. Of the manifold emotional and affective states that dot the colonial experiential space, anxiety is the most critical given its power to question the very fixities around which colonial discourses are organized. That is to say, anxiety challenges, destabilizes, and ruptures the ideological (con)-figurations that facilitate asymmetric circulations of power and constitution of identities within colonialism.

The importance of anxiety to Freud and Lacan is well known. It is the "nodal point" in the constitution of the subject as a subject of repression (Freud) or signification (Lacan).[282] Anxiety for Lacan defines the position of the subject vis-à-vis the Other (symbolic order) and the imaginary objects of fantasy. Anxiety signals a disturbance in the subject's relation to the symbolic Other and the imaginary objects sustaining its identity. In other words, anxiety as symptom is closely tied to the issue of identity. In what follows, I investigate articulations of anxiety in colonial discourse in relation to gestures desirous of securing identities.

This critical move toward investigating anxieties afflicting the colonial experiential space is not new. The role of anxiety in structuring the colonizer-colonized relationship and as responsible for producing psychopathic conditions amongst both the colonizer and the colonized have been noted before by Franz Fanon, Alain Grosrichard, O. Mannoni and, more recently, by Homi Bhabha, Henry Kripps, and Christopher Lane. Fanon, for example, notes how the harsh realities of colonial rule – the indiscriminate torture and execution of natives – psychologically

[282] Much like Freud in the 'introductory lectures,' where he called anxiety a nodal point for all his writings (*SE* 16:393), Lacan terms his seminar on anxiety as the "point of rendez-vous" for all his previous teachings and the "terrain" where the major issues of psychoanalysis are "knotted." However, many psychoanalysts including Jacques-Alain Miller in his 'Introduction to the Reading of Jacques Lacan's seminar on Anxiety' have called Lacan's seminar X a "work in progress;" a "workshop" wherein a number of ideas are introduced but not developed till later. I feel seminar X is richer than most of Lacan's other seminars because of its range and ambition. As Harari notes, discussions in this seminar range from the *objet a* to sado-masochism, from feminine sexuality to the Real, from jouissance to the critique of the imaginary. Historically too, seminar X is important. It occupies, what can be called, an act of 'passage.' Located between seminar IX, *Identification*, where Lacan for the first time introduces topology thus moving away from his earlier 'structuralist' model to the radical concept of the 'knotting of the three orders,' and seminar XI, *The Four Fundamentals of Psychoanalysis*, where Lacan takes up in greater detail the delineation of what in seminar XXI he calls his greatest invention and contribution to psychoanalysis, the *objet petit a* (Fink *Lacanian Subject* 83), seminar X is one of the most overlooked seminars , possibly excluding seminar XVII.

affect both the perpetrators of those crimes and the victims (*Wretched*). Similarly, Mannoni contends that a constant fear in the colonizer about the native leads to anxieties about the security of European women and racial identity (*Prospero*). Current views often follow Mannoni to argue that colonial anxiety is "the seemingly constant fear and concern of colonizers with the threat of violence on the part of the colonized, a concern with [….] 'knowability'" (Green 'Turn' 813). These make the common mistake of conflating anxiety with fear, though the point about "constancy," or the restless anticipation on part of the colonizer about when the colonized will challenge the political and epistemic status quo is, as I show below, noteworthy for understanding the affective agency of anxiety. My argument in a sense then departs from existing readings to hypothesize that anxiety inhabits the colonial experiential space as a *fundamental signature*; the temporal differential evidenced through constant apprehensions about the Other attest the same.

Anxiety originates with the first gesture of colonialism – signification of the colonized as different. Anxiety is structural: it comes into being at the moment of symbolic articulation of the self as 'I' or exclusive. This structural anxiety finds conscious expression through events like the Mutiny. It is important to keep in mind that anxiety is real, it signals, as Lacan explains, the sudden intrusion of the real into the imaginary and symbolic. Hence, at the level of representation, anxiety cannot be articulated except through metaphors or symbols. In speech and writing, anxiety always appears as an anxiety about something. Such metaphorical representations imply that textualizations of anxiety are open to ideological processes. Nonetheless, it is through these metaphors and symbols – the objects and things that provoke anxiety – we can identify the function and agency of anxiety as the real. Or, as in the particular

context my research, as disruptive of imaginary identities and knowledge. These arguments will be clear in the course of this chapter.

For the moment, let me state that I focus here specifically on Bhabha because he is most perceptive when it comes to identifying the different modalities governing the presence, circulation, and representations of anxiety in colonial discourse.[283] Another reason for choosing Bhabha has partly to do with charges brought against him in recent years, and more generally against psychoanalytic readings of colonialism, as ignoring the material contexts of colonialism.[284] My intention is to show that anxiety is linked to structures of subjectivity and intersubjective relationships within the colonial symbolic order, on the one hand, and as located in the historical context, practice, and psychological tensions of 'modern day' European colonialism, on the other. That is to say, circulation of anxiety within colonialism need not be understood in exclusion of colonialism as a material and epistemic practice. Instead, anxiety wedges itself in between the epistemic modality of claiming support for colonialism as a Historical necessity, i.e., premised upon ideals of humanism and rationality, and what colonialism as a material practice is essentially predicated upon, i.e., "domination, manipulation, exploitation, and disenfranchisement" of the colonized (JanMohamed 78). A study of anxiety in relation to colonialism should not be misjudged as closing off the political. Rather, the presence of anxiety and associated phenomena like repetition and violence in colonial discourses exemplify the larger socio-political context of post-Enlightenment capitalist modernity and its hegemonic tendencies.

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[283] I consider two essays by Bhabha, namely, Homi Bhabha, 'The Other Question: Stereotype, Discrimination and the Discourse of Colonialism,' here after TOQ, and 'Articulating the Archaic: Cultural Difference and Colonial Nonsense,' here after ATA. Bhabha is also the only postcolonial theorist to touch upon the subject of the Indian Mutiny in relation to anxiety. I am referring to Bhabha's essay 'By Bread Alone: Signs of Violence in the Mid-Nineteenth Century.'

[284] See, for e.g. JanMohamed 'The Economy of Manichean Allegory;' Benita Parry, 'Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse.'

But how are anxieties produced by colonialism and symbolic situations ascertained by colonialism different from or similar to those discussed by Lacan? Is there something distinct called colonial anxiety that can enable us to probe deeper into colonialism as a material and historical phenomena, and psychologies prompted by colonialism? This theoretical appendix seeks to address these questions by taking up psychoanalytic theory of anxiety and postcolonial discussions on anxiety to see if these can contribute towards explaining how anxieties are produced within the colonial experiential space. I will begin by looking at the theoretical contours of anxiety as explained by Freud and Lacan, and then focus on Bhabha's arguments regarding the origin of anxiety qua fetishistic constructions of the Other.

Reading Anxiety, Reading Lacan

In session vii of Seminar X, Lacan postulates, though not for the first time, the constitutive relation of the *objet a*, to be variously understood as the object of fantasy and the object defining the radical otherness of the Other, to the subject. This relationship according to him is also responsible for provoking anxiety. The *objet a* as the sign of otherness is situated in the locus of the Other. It allows the subject to identify the other as Other, the primary care-giver as the (m)Other, and then 'grasp' through the specular form of its own (mis)recognized image on the 'mirror' the identity of the self as distinct from the Other. This interiorization of what is outside – in the Other and the unconscious – constitutes the 'I' of the subject (session viii, 16.1.63). In the 'Mirror Stage' essay, delivered about fourteen years before Lacan made a similar point regarding the constitution of subject when he stated, "For the total form of his body [which is the specular image of the infant on the mirror], by which the subject anticipates the maturation of his power in a mirage, is given to him only as a gestalt. That is, in an exteriority [by which is united] the *I* with the statue onto which man projects himself, the phantoms that dominate him,

and the automaton with which the world of his own making tends to achieve fruition in an ambiguous relation" (76-77). In Seminar X however, as Ellie Ragland notes, Lacan makes an interesting revision to his Mirror-stage theory. He argues that it is not so much the gestalt but the hole or loss identified as lack in the subject, which constitutes the moment of identification with the inverted mirror image (See, Ragland 'Psychical').

Three critical ideas are present in the mirror stage essay and all of them are fundamental for understanding the trajectory of subject-object and subject-object-anxiety relations. First, the specular image on the mirror founds the ego or 'I.' Second, this process of identification alienates the self qua the inverse specular image which is in the locus of the Other. That is, the subject as 'I' is dependent on and impossible without the intervention of the (m)Other's support, the agency of the *trotte-bébé* etc.. Third, following the first two, the subject splits irrevocably into a subject of the unconscious and a conscious subject. Ragland explains Lacan's theory of identity formation through the interiorization of an external gestalt during mirror stage thus:

> identity, thus viewed [on the mirror], is excentrically layered, first by a passive perceptual fusion with transient images or objects whose matrices are the part-objects of Desire, and second by the occurrence of a species-specific active identification with body form. After the mirror stage, sights, sounds, words, dicta, and familial and cultural myths add up to the narcissistic [*moi*] fixations that sustain the sense of having an identity during adulthood, even though they were put in place in childhood (*Philosophy* 21).

In the seminars on anxiety Lacan presents the mirror-stage argument in a slightly more complicated form as "there where you say: 'I,' it is there properly speaking that at the level of the unconscious there is situated *a* [that is, the *objet a*]" (Session viii, 16.1.63). Unlike the 'Mirror-stage' essay here Lacan prioritizes the importance of the *objet a* in precise terms. The

objet a defines the other as Other or symbolic during the formative perceptual stage, thereby leading the subject to identify with an ego. To put this differently, the mother becomes an Other in consequence of a symbolic interdiction and the subject by identifying with this interdiction assumes for itself an identity as a lacking or desiring subject. Following this, fantastic objects fill the subject's lack or desire by standing in for what the subject desires in the Other. This two-fold process is elaborated on by Lacan in his *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* given a year after the seminar on anxiety. In *Four Fundamental*, he speaks of two distinct processes critical to the constitution of neurotic and/or normative subjectivities. First, "alienation" of the infant from a dyadic relationship with the Mother following an identification of the (m)Other as other. Second, the "separation" of the infant from the (m)Other and identification of the self as 'I.' Separation constitutes otherness of/in the (m)Other as prohibited hence desirable. Object here can be anything and not only a material object – a word, an ideal, a belief etc. This second stage is mediated by the *Nom-du-pere* or the 'Name of the Father,' whereby the subject is constituted in relation to the Father as Symbolic Law or Other and what the subject unconsciously identifies as the object of its desire. The *objet a* in context of these stages passes from being the signifier of the other's Otherness, that which the Other has and the subject is prohibited from getting, to being the fantastic object that the subject desires. The point to be noted here is that the separation of the object from the (m)Other and its resituation at the level of desire as an object of fantasy to be sought by the subject constitutes the subject as a subject of desire. Second, and no less importantly, this separation and relocation of the object at the level of desire displace what was earlier a thing from a particular body, the body of the Mother let's say, and replaces it at the level of language or desire as language. Schematically put, the object as an object of demand tied to the body of the primary care-giver is the phallus, which

through separation is dispersed at the level of desire as objects with no apparent connection to the phallus. In a sense then what Lacan reproduces through his theory of alienation and separation is the concept of castration that is central to Freud's thinking about subjectivity. The caveat introduced by Lacan is of course most crucial: the fantastic object(s) of desire have no apparent connection to the phallus; that relation is severed by introduction of language.

The digression into *Four Fundamental* was necessary because in seminar X Lacan claims that anxiety shares a relation to castration, or castration complex more precisely, due to the "common denominator of the cut" in both (session vii, 9.1.63). Anxiety is inextricably tied up with the *objet a*, the small other, via the constitutive agency of the cut which is initiated through a symbolization of the paternal metaphor or the object of desire as extrinsically located in the symbolic order (ibid.). It is in the symbolic order, at the level of and through language, that the subject is destined to hunt for the object that would satisfy its desire.

In context of colonial discourse as a symbolic space and colonial identities as imaginary positions constructed within that symbolic space, Lacanian theory of identity formation gains a critical angle. This is because, colonialism demands a separation be made between the colonizer and the native, and this separation is created after attributing the native with an essential otherness in context of which the self as 'not same' is defined. This 'forced metaphorization' of the other as Other, or the condensation of the pluralized colonized culture into one single identifiable component structured around an essential difference, enacts a forced separation between the colonizer and the colonized. Structurally this segregated space is prone to implosions; the signifier/s of difference risks emptying out leading to the collapse of colonial hegemony. These implosions consequently drive colonial discourse to constantly monitor the cosmetic margins of difference. It is anxiety over the collapse of the colonial symbolic order and

the difference between the self and Other that leads to anxiety. While repetition in colonial discourse can be understood as the signature of incessant monitoring of this difference as objective knowledge, singularity of events such as the Indian Mutiny should be read in terms of a sudden breakdown of this cosmetic order. Colonial anxiety, then, is produced as a nascent structural fault at the instance of forced metaphorization and whenever the colonized announces its desire to break out of their objectified positions (i.e., whenever *it speaks*!) the colonial imaginary breaks over this fault. But is anxiety over the colonized and the threat of their violence not the same thing as the fear of being killed, raped, and enslaved by the native Other? Is there a difference between fear of the native as an unknown quantity and anxiety about what an act of dissent by the native might threaten?[285] Freud and Lacan are categorical in their emphases on the differences between fear and anxiety.

In 'Inhibition, Symptom, and Anxiety,' Freud changed this earlier view about anxiety as caused by accumulated libido to claim that anxiety surfaces when a threat of dissolution is felt by the ego (*SE* 20).[286] By 1926, he brought into limelight three different forms of anxiety – realistic anxiety, moral anxiety, and signal or neurotic anxiety. Freud described realistic anxiety as akin to fear where the threat and the object of the threat can be both perceived in the external phenomenological reality. As one commentator notes, the German word used by Freud for realistic-anxiety was 'fear' which was translated by the editors of the Standard Edition as 'anxiety.' Thus, we can safely say that realistic anxiety is fear of dangerous objects. With the

[285] Act here is to be understood as both demand and as direct physical action threatening the colonial military and epistemic systems.

[286] During 1890s, Freud, still entwined in physiology, defined anxiety as the product of pent up sexual energies that fails to find adequate discharge. Accordingly, in this stage of Freudian thinking, a stage Charles Shepherdson has aptly called the phase of "pipes and valves," anxiety for Freud is directly related to the failure of the organism to 'let off steam' – to discharge accumulated sexual libido and reach a state of equilibrium. Dylan Evans correctly notes that, what we have is a shift from physiology to the psychic in Freud. However as Charles Shepherdson argues, this clear-cut classification is not adequate for explaining the complexities of Freud's thought. See, Shepherdson, 'Foreword,' ix-lxii.

other two categories however we enter a more complicated terrain. Moral anxiety is defined by Freud as the danger felt by the subject due to the demands of the Super-ego, the Symbolic Other in Lacan. Signal or neurotic anxiety by definition signals to dangers threatening the ego's imaginary sense of security and oneness/unity. Importantly though the actual object or objects posing the threat, unlike in realistic anxiety, is absent or lacking (*SE* 20:165). This theory of anxiety has found commonplace acceptance in academic (and philosophical) discussions – anxiety is caused by the realization of a lack, both at the phenomenological level and that of the ego. However, as Richard Boothby observes, in spite of Freud's sincere attempts at defining the particular nature of the threat Freud actually never succeeds in offering an acceptable answer. The issue for signal or neurotic anxiety then is: *what* precisely constitutes the threat (qtd. in Shepherdson 'Foreword' xxv). Therefore with Freud, we cannot go very far in answering what is colonial anxiety. We can say that colonial anxiety is a threat felt by the colonizer's ego, and the systems of knowledge and power on which this ego is built. But what is the object-cause of this threat? Are it the rebellious colonized and their 'inhuman' acts of dissent? If yes, then, the curtailment of the rebellion and containment of the rebels would end all anxieties. Yet that did not happen.

Lacan addresses this problematic question left unanswered by Freud in his seminar X. At the heart of his rereading of Freud is the theory of the ego and the subject is *not* one and the same. On basis of this distinction, Lacan explains that while fear entails a threat to the physical well-being of the individual, anxiety threatens the *position* of the subject in the symbolic order. If to Freud, anxiety signals a threat to the imaginary unity of the body, which is first set in motion by a feeling of lack or separation [from the Mother or the imaginary phallus] (*SE* 16:395; 20:161), for Lacan then anxiety is not caused by lack but by the absence of lack! It is this radical

revisioning of Freud by Lacan, which has led Jacques-Alain Miller to call Lacan's theory of anxiety as "Lacanian anxiety" – a distinct theorization of anxiety when compared to Freud (Miller 'Introduction'). What then is 'Lacanian anxiety'? Moreover, how does it help us in understanding the relation between the subject and the Other, especially in context of colonialism and colonial discourse that represents the Other qua its radical otherness? Let me address this by playing off Lacan's famous maxim that anxiety is "*not* without an object" against Freud's theoretical claim that anxiety as opposed to fear lacks an object (session x, 30.1.63).

Two major comments made by Lacan in his seminar X– anxiety is caused by the 'lack of a lack' and 'anxiety is not without an object' –begs the question: what is the object in anxiety? Given Lacan's conceptualization of anxiety as performing/enacting a cautionary and constitutional function, I think it would be better to ask instead, what is the object*ive* of anxiety? There have been number of attempts to address this question. Let me cite just two. Roberto Harari in his *Introduction to Lacan's Seminar on Anxiety* defines anxiety as signaling the "constriction of the gap between desire and jouissance" (258); while Slavoj Zizek elaborates anxiety as the 'revelation' of the truth of the symbolic Order – the symbolic's threat to devour the subject ('Kierkegaard'). Following Harari and Zizek's definitions we can say that anxiety emerges between desire and jouissance, or when the *objet a* as a fantastic object occupying the gap between desire and jouissance collapses. In other words, anxiety as affect and/or signal appears at the moment of the crumbling of *objet a* as the fantastic object of desire and the resultant exposure of the void that it had been covering all through. This gap in Lacan is termed the real; a gap exists between reality produced through fantastic (and ideological) discourses and the reality as it *really* is. One needs to understand that in seminar X the *objet a* is not only the specular object that Lacan had defined earlier in seminar IV; instead it is a part of the real, for

that matter it *is* the real. The *object a*, as we have it in seminar X, emerges at the moment when the symbolic Other intervenes in the Mother-Child dyad thus separating the (m)Other from the subject. What falls out of this operation as a remainder or surplus (Lacan would associate this idea with Marxist notion of surplus value later in seminar XVI) is the *objet a* in its twofold avatar. First, as the fantastic object of desire that promises completion to the subject and defines its itinerary, and, second, the object as the Other's jouissance that remains forever barred from the subject.[287] It is as this barred jouissance of the Other that the *objet a* constitutes both the subject of desire (or, the desire of the subject) and reinscribes (knots) the subject-object-desire space with the real. In a sense, anxiety is already prefigured in the subject-(fantastic) object relation by way of the cut that organizes its incidence in the dialectics of desire (session viii, 16.1.63; session ix, 23.1.63). The function of the *objet a* is therefore best understood knotting the three orders into a Borromean chain. For the object as an object of desire, hence a symbolic object, is sustained by the imaginary which pins fantasy; and the object as lack or real is defined by its symbolic mediation in the relationship that defines the subject as a subject of desire, i.e., as desiring, again, within fantasy (session x, 30.1.63). In 'later Lacan', the *objet a* as responsible for knotting the three orders and constituting the subject will be termed the *sinthome*.

In Lacan, then, we have a twofold classification of anxiety. First, anxiety as signaling the threat of encountering the void or hole in the Real and, second, anxiety as it is programmed into the subject-object relationship as a *haunting*. Jacques-Alain Miller develops this thesis into his categorization of anxiety as "constituted" and "constituent" (qtd. in Zizek 'Liberal Utopia'). In context of the first, it is the intervention of the Other's otherness, the *a* as real, which leads to anxiety by opening up the Other's lack or Other's demand as the signature of the Other's

[287] The dual role of the objet a as object cause of desire and the impediment to the satisfaction of that desire is best explicated by Lacan in his discussion of the 'fort-da' game in *Four Fundamental Concepts* (62-63).

jouissance. Or, anxiety emerges when the real intrudes into the imaginary threatening the *subject*.[288] The intrusion of the real which breaks down the subject's fantastic relationship with the object of desire, the relation characterized by Lacan as $ ‹› *a*, involves the sudden transformation of the *objet a* from an imaginary fantastic support to the subject to revealing the real to the subject.[289] It is in context of this alteration of the object from imaginary to the real that Lacan's maxim "anxiety is *not without* an object" hinges on. For 'not without,' '*pas sans*,' does not imply the object is absent. Rather, it qualifies the object's *alteration* from imaginary to real as a "conditional liaison" linking being to having (session vii, 9.1.63). In other words, Lacan postulates anxiety as resulting from a "moment of moulting;" that is the moment when the imaginary "situatable," "locatable," and "exchangeable" object and the "private, incommunicable and […] dominant [or real] object" appear interchangeable (ibid.). If one carries the metaphor of moulting further, it can be said, with direct reference to the essay 'Signification of the Phallus,' that the unveiling of the imaginary introduces by way of the 'conditional liaison' the agency of the *objet a* in the incidence of the subject at the moment of an encounter characterized by the ultimate fading of the ego/self – signaling an impending fading of the subject as a desiring subject, hence producing anxiety. It is this threat to the imaginary unity of the body felt at the level of the ego, but signaled to the subject, i.e., the barred subject of desire, that we need to conceptualize in context of the cautionary agency of anxiety.

However, a distinction ought to be made here following Miller's theorization of the difference between anxiety as emerging from an actual encounter with the *objet a* "as constituted in its very loss" and anxiety over the possibility of interchangeability – the known object

[288] Harari presents this beautifully through a diagram in his *How James Joyce Made His Name* (See, Harari *Joyce* 16).
[289] In his *Écrits*, Lacan describes the character of the *objet a* in relation to the subject as that of "envelopment, development, conjunction, [and] disjunction." It is the last term in this description, which is further elaborated in *seminar X* in terms of the cut or Real as haunting the subject-object structural relationship.

transforming into an unknown thing – which haunts the subject 'enveloped' in its desire of/for the object (qtd. in Zizek 'Liberal Utopia'). Anxiety or signal/neurotic anxiety is a phenomenon that attends neurosis and as such is absent in psychotics for whom objects, i.e. symbolic order, is lacking. Anxiety, therefore, cannot come into effect as affect without the symbolic order. As Lacan puts it, "anxiety" is the object's "only subjective expression" (session vii, 16.1.63). The universe of objects or the symbolic order is a necessary *a priori* for anxiety to surface. The difference that Miller proposes between "constituted" and "constituent" anxiety pivots around the subject's negotiation with this symbolic order of objects – "constituted" anxiety involves the subject's relation with the object within [i.e., as it dwells within] fantasy, while "constituent" anxiety entails the subject's traversing of fantasy and confronting the real as loss as constituted by the object [qtd. in Zizek 'Liberal Utopia').

This brings us to yet another question: what is the relation of the subject with the symbolic Other qua anxiety; with the locus of the Law, language, and the symbolic order to be exact? Lacan offers a succinct explanation in seminar X when he observes that the subject "constitutes itself at the locus of the Other as marked by the signifier […] inversely suspending the whole existence of the Other on a guarantee which is lacking, [that of] the barred Other: Ø" (session ix, 23.1.63). That is to say, the subject comes into being as a desiring subject by repressing the possibility that the Other lacks; or the Other is absent. The Other exists for the neurotic-normative subject as complete, definitive, and without any lack. When the lack in the Other comes to the foreground via demands made by the Other, or when the Other is revealed as being absent or as fiction, the symbolic order supporting the subject and its imaginary desires collapse. In context of the Mutiny it can be said that the Uprising stages this unnerving situation. The Mutiny signals not only a lack in the Other but the Other as absent, thereby generating

anxiety. The colonized other as the Other reveals itself through the Mutiny as 'same' as the self and/or as demanding. Both conditions, as I show in my chapters, provoke anxiety since these break down the symbolic order of difference vis-à-vis which the self of the colonizer claims exclusivity.

In *Television* Lacan elucidates this situation more interestingly by comparing anxiety to a "knife's edge" – not just any knife but the proverbial knife that lies at the heart of the castration complex fantasy. This knife illuminates the dialectic of God/Other-Abraham relationship which, as a dialectic, transcends desire to include the enigma of confrontation with drive (*triebe*). Anxiety emerges at the edge of the knife, when God as the Other demands Abraham to sacrifice for *HIS* jouissance Abraham's most precious possession, i.e., his son. However, it is the last moment intervention from God, an intervention that arrives in form of speech and substitutes the son with a ram thus separating the possibility of identifying with the Other's jouissance or Other's demand, which is crucial for our purposes of understanding anxiety. Anxiety emerges as a signal when Abraham confronts the enigma of the Other's desire, but its agency should be understood as ultimately separating the two (the Other's jouissance from the Other's desire) by substituting the son with an*other* thing, the ram. This is where we need to locate the constitutional or suturing agency of anxiety: anxiety substitutes the Other's jouissance, bars it from the subject, and places the subject in relation to another object thereby closing the gap. It is in this separation that anxiety shares its agency with castration complex as far as castration also functions to enact a cut.[290] As Miller shows, this act separates the *a* and places it in the side of the Other ('Introduction'). Thereafter, anxiety as a signal finds its ultimate objective in establishing or re-establishing the fantastic imaginary relationship of the subject to the other

[290] This is precisely why Freud criticized those who dismiss "the question of castration" and produce a theory of anxiety without "any admixture of sexual factors" or references to sexuality, more generally. See, *SE* 20: 128-129.

thereby "stopping" (as Miller writes in his 'A and a in Clinical Structures') all access to Other's jouissance.[291]

In 'Analysis Terminable and Interminable' Freud had likewise characterized transference as resistance to cure, that is, as a demand to the Other for the restitution of the imaginary object, the minus phi (- φ), which allows the subject to suture the gap opened up by the intrusion of the real during analysis (*SE 23*). We thus not only find a validation of anxiety as emerging at the space between desire and jouissance, but also as an agent of 'suture.' Anxiety functions to stitch up the 'breach' between the Other and the subject by opening up space for the fantastic support object to announce itself. When Freud says anxiety is caused by a traumatic situation that poses a threat to the ego, it is to this intrusion of the real that he refers. An intrusion for which the subject is not prepared, a sudden infringement that deconstructs the imaginary order revealing the 'I' as the subject of the drive, thus bereft of will, power, authority, and volition. Anxiety is a defense against the re-cognition (knowledge) of subjective abjection in the symbolic order. It throws the subject down into the abyss of nothingness, or forces the subject, as Kierkegaard describes anxiety, to look down into an abyss! The function of anxiety is therefore organizational – it reconstructs subject-desire-object relationship by suturing the imaginary-symbolic space from the intrusion of the real. However, this suturing only manages to construct the *a* as surplus, an *agalma*, that falls on the side of the Other thereby establishing a 'limit' to the subject's itinerary, consequently charting out its graph of subjectivity in the field of desire qua the Other.

The *objet a*, which falls out as a remainder delineating the limits of subjectivity, assumes critical significance in detailing the function of discourse in context of ideological interpellations. I will end my discussion of anxiety in psychoanalytic literature here to focus on

[291] In seminar XI, Lacan advise training analysts, similarly, to 'serve' anxiety in "small doses" to analysands in order to counter transference or the identification of the analysands with the analyst's desire (41).

discourse, since theoretical studies on colonialism have focused on the function of discourse for unearthing the nuances of colonial experience. But this focus on discourse does not imply that a psychoanalytic understanding of colonialism is at odds with all possibility of investigating colonialism as a material phenomenon. Quite the contrary. Psychoanalysis can clarify the links between discourse and hegemony by situating fantasy as a functional agent in ideology. Lacan takes up this subject for discussion in his seminar XVII, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*.

Reading Colonialism, Reading Lacan

Formulating his theory of Four Discourses as "social link," Lacan returns to considering objects and their relation to the subject within the symbolic order (Seminar XVII). For Lacan, there are four fundamental discourses – Master's discourse, University discourse, Hysteric's discourse, and the analyst's discourse; all other discourses being derivatives of these four. Each of these four is constituted of combinations of four categories occupying four positions signifying or corresponding to four *contexts*:

Agent/desire	→	Other/work
Truth	//	production/loss

The four categories are: S1 or the Master Signifier; S2 or Knowledge; $ or the barred subject; and, *a* or the surplus.

The Master's Discourse is written as:

S1	→	S2
$	//	*a*

In this schema, the S1 occupies the position of the Agent; S2 is in the position of the Other; the barred subject as Truth; and the *objet a* is that which falls out (hence occupying the position of loss) after the chain of signifiers have been 'constructed' (S1 …S2). Two things are of critical

significance in this formulation. First, the 'chain of signifiers' is, as Lacan reminds us, founded around the master signifier (S1) which is not only nonsensical, implying as having no particular relation to any other signifier, but also arbitrary. It comes to exist because of the violent decree of the master – as his pure enjoyment – and following which the rest of the chain (i.e., S2…S3…S4 and so on) builds up. Second, in the master's discourse the *objet a* marks the limit, since it signifies what falls outside as surplus and as such exists beyond the subject's ability to attain or access it. The subject, in effect, is conditioned/constituted in this discourse by a lack or loss represented by the *objet a*.

This theory of the subject as constituted by discourse is radically different from Foucault's who envisions the subject as constructed through an epistemic shift founded around 'reason.' For Foucault, an ideological shift facilitates the organization of society around the rationale of Enlightenment thus allowing ideology through discourse to construct conformative social subjects via dispensations of 'discipline and punishment' and/or encoding of the body. What is missing from Foucault's (early) theory is the issue of what remains as surplus after such an epistemic ideological shift has taken place. Whether something is 'lost' in the transition (or translation) is not brought up by Foucault. However, we see this concern not only in Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1912-1913), but also in Enlightenment thinkers like Rousseau. While Freud identifies the murder of the Primal Father as the ultimate renunciation of jouissance, Rousseau characterizes 'social contract' as founded through the collective sacrifice of certain rights and privileges (See, espc., chpt. 6, Book I 59-62). What in Freud's theory of social organization is 'sacrificed' with the act of murder, in Rousseau is a matter of being 'written off,' or willed away; the word murders the thing and relegates certain individual rights to the domain of the inaccessible. Social organization or the social state, for both Freud and Rousseau, one can argue,

requires incurring certain losses. However, Rousseau's example is more instructive given the implicit connection it makes with fantasy; that is the fantasy that occupies the absence created through the act of renunciation. To explain: Rousseau's thesis poses itself as the testament of Enlightenment rational will – reason, rationality, will, the self as objects of desire – via which, one can say, a liberal-modern social state comes into existence. But the renunciation of certain rights of the self, which in Freud's example turns around the question of jouissance, a wound to narcissism, is healed only through fictitious reconstructions of a rational liberal self and modernity in Rousseau's myth. Lacan brings to light the agency of a critical loss (for example, the phallus in early Freud) as the conditioning agency of life and social subjectivity. If in seminar X, this loss, marked as *a*, is shown to inform the very being of an individual subject. And in seminar XVII the *objet a* functions to set limits through discourse and further arrest the social subject.

What is this *objet a* that falls on Other side (I deliberately play here with Lacan's title for seminar XVII) and is revealed in its most horrific stature provoking anxiety? In considering this, we must take into deliberation what Miller calls 'extimité' or extimate. Extimate is the inner most and precious possession of the self that is repressed and *re*-located in the Other. In the Other, it functions to signify the "primitive otherness" that characterizes the Other as Other. Or, the extimité (as related to the French word *intimate* or what Freud identified through his study of the *unheimlich* as the 'uncanny') is that part of the subject opened up through the articulation of the Other's desire which the Other desires as its own. Miller explains this as the real kernel of the Other's jouissance, which at the instance of anxiety exposes itself as what the subject desires (for, the desire of Man is the desire of the Other). It is this revelation of the Other as inhabiting

the self, which Freud had identified in slips of pen and jokes, and that according to Miller is also responsible for triggering anxiety.

Returning to Lacan's seminar on the 'four discourses,' it has to be admitted that Lacan here addresses the function and agency of discourse from various directions. It is not possible to discuss all of them but I want to touch upon the University discourse as in conjunction with the Master's discourse it is crucial for explicating colonialism or the discourse of colonialism. If with the Master's discourse Lacan seeks to historically locate the agency of discourse as it functioned during the rule of supreme kings, i.e. kings as gods, the University discourse locates a shift in that history – a movement from the tyranny of absolutist regimes to that of science and knowledge. The University discourse historically follows the Master's discourse and the shift in political economy from feudalism to capitalism. In the 'regime' of this discourse, the position of the master signifier as supreme authority is occupied by knowledge as neutral and scientific. The determination of knowledge as neutral and as founded on the premise of rational objective authority defines the University discourse both historically and conceptually. In the University discourse, the four terms originally found in the Master's discourse undergo a quarter-turn thereby presenting a *modified* version of the original (master's) discourse. The University discourse is written as:

$$\begin{array}{ll} \underline{S2} & \rightarrow \quad \underline{a} \\ S1 & // \quad \$ \end{array}$$

I say modified because though the position of the agent or master in University discourse is occupied by S2 as the signifier of neutral scientific hence supreme knowledge, the signifier of the master (S1) occupies the position of truth/subject to support the position of the 'agent' or

'desire,' viz. knowledge. In other words, the master lends credibility to knowledge and the master's involvement spreads from the position of knowledge as the agent.

The similarity between Lacan's University discourse and Said's arguments on the function of knowledge in *Orientalism* hardly needs to be stressed here. The complicity between Western rational Enlightenment and colonial discourses is an established article in the annals of postcolonial studies. Knowledge posing as scientific and neutral, devised independently or within parameters of Universities and other such institutions, constructed the Orient and the oriental as the Other. In their so-called scientific and rational pursuits, Europe produced knowledge of the Other's difference through detailed examinations of varied 'otherness.' The knowledge about the Other is not only presented for purposes of neutral scientific inquiry, but for consolidating an image of the self. Knowledge serves the imaginary discourses of colonialism for claiming superiority of the West (the Master) over the colonized. What remains hidden in colonialism as University discourse is the position of the Master (S1) and what is inevitably produced in effect of this discourse is the split subject ($). The latter is produced as loss. If the split subject is the condition out of which the Master's discourse comes to be enunciated, in the quarter turn necessitated by the shift from feudalism to capitalism, from the abhorred regressive past to a rational modernity, this split subject ends up as veiled, denied, and/or lost in the University discourse.[292] This is at the heart of Rousseau's theory of social contract as well, given the subject qua contract emerges out of alienation and into "unity, [a] common *ego*," its "life and its will" condensed into One (*Social* 61).

Colonialism seeks to establish an acceptable social link in-between forceful colonization of other's lands and the ideals of liberal modernity which are evoked to justify territorial

[292] These three suggest that the negotiation with the production of split subject can occur at imaginary, symbolic, and real registers.

occupation by drawing support from religious and/or scientific knowledge – the discourse of White Man's burden. This phenomenon as material and significative practice must be located at the point of conjoinment between the Master's and University discourses. To put it differently, the central problematic within colonialism involves a tension between brute articulations of power and a self-righteous posture assumed to mitigate power as pre-modern. These affect the colonizer as much as it does the indigenous bourgeois; they are both subjects of desire and exist at best in a tense relation to what the ethics of colonial experience demands of them. In case of the colonizer, this is the maximization of profit, while for the colonized it should be the end of colonial rule. Yet both fail to pursue their respective ethical duties, one trammeled by a desire to appear righteous and the other out of desire for claiming modernity. This dissonance symptomatically enunciates anxiety as the signifier of a fragile and forced collaboration within colonial experience. Events like the Indian Mutiny function as a stage for bringing out such structural and ideological tensions within colonialism. Events like the 1857 Uprising consequently draws their singularity from this staging. Though anxieties over the event may be various, these are all in fact all related to a single context, namely, the collapse of imaginary orders of knowledge, identity, and the Other as different. This brings me to the doorsteps of Bhabha who has tried to unravel this structural dislocation within colonial experience, colonial discourse, and situations of colonial modernity.

Reading Anxiety, Reading Bhabha

In two essays, 'The Other Question' and 'Articulating the Archaic,' Bhabha delineates his theory of colonial anxiety in most detail. The two kinds of anxiety described by Bhabha can be termed as "constitutive" and "constituent" anxiety. Anxiety about which Bhabha speaks in 'The Other Question' is clearly "constitutive" or structural anxiety – anxiety inhabiting and

irking the self-other colonial experiential space qua the constitutive metaphors of colonial discourse. The construction of the Other in colonial discourse, Bhabha notes, "demands an articulation of forms of difference" objectifying the Other qua otherness (TOQ 96). This otherness which is at once an "object of desire and derision […] reveals […] the boundaries of colonial discourse" and "enables a transgression of these limits from the space of that otherness" (96). In contrast to this particular theorization, Bhabha's discussion in 'Articulating the Archaic' points at the fading of imperial imaginaries through encounters with, what he terms, "colonial nonsense" (ATA 177). This, I will show, is similar to "constituent" anxiety.

Bhabha himself does not establish any difference between these two forms of anxieties. Moreover, his 'general' theory of anxiety, circumscribed by a reading of subject-object, self-Other, colonizer-colonized relation, identifies colonial anxiety as a product of the fetishistic character of colonial discourse. This approach is not only distanced from Lacan's reading of Freud's theory of neurotic/signal anxiety but in approaching colonial anxiety from the direction of fetishism/perversion, this also misreads the subject's investment in and relation to anxiety within the colonial context. In this section, I will consider Bhabha's theory of anxiety as explicated in these two essays in relation to and against Lacan's reading of anxiety as discussed in the preceding section.

'The Other Question' focuses on two things. One, it identifies the dependence of colonial discourse on constructing 'fixities' for consolidating signs of otherness in order to differentiate the self from the Other. Two, it emphasizes the impossibility of this particular task as responsible for the anxious repetitions which characterize colonial discourse (TOQ 94-95). Bhabha connects the two through his discussion of the stereotype as "a form of knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place,' already known, and [yet] something that must be

anxiously repeated." This is essentially so because there is always a gap between representational reality and the reality. As "if the essential duplicity of the Asiatic […] that needs no proof, can never really, in discourse, be proved" (95). Ambivalence in Bhabha is a product of representational reality that ignores, denies, represses, or forecloses the polyphonic reality of the Other by forcing the Other in representation as a stereotype. However, in explaining how this ambivalence structures colonial discourse and experience Bhabha avoids emphasizing what that ambivalent relationship with the Other evoke as affect, namely anxiety. That is not to say Bhabha does not consider ambivalence as responsible for the anxious reproductions and reconstructions of discourse and otherness within that discourse. Yet, what is missing from Bhabha's argument is a detailed explication of anxiety as demarcating the contours of subjectivity and imperial imaginaries. His claim, that "my reading of colonial discourse suggests that the point of intervention should shift […] to an understanding of the *processes of subjectification* " qua ambivalence of the Other, does not, in the long run, take into account the question of anxiety as resting on the jouissance of the Other or ambivalence as announcing this jouissance (TOQ 95). In other words, Bhabha does not carry his argument to the point that shows ambivalence as liable for rupturing subject positions by exposing the lack in the Other.

Further still, Bhabha's reading of anxiety as effect and as resulting from the impossibility of fixing any sign as stable, a theoretical premise borrowed as much from semiotics and Derrida as from psychoanalysis, misreads the entire chain of cause and effect by locating anxiety in the domain of effect. It appears from Bhabha's arguments that instability of the object – material, imaginary, or symbolic – produces anxiety. Anxiety should not be read as caused by the vacillation of the object only, but what the instability of the objects signals, namely the *absence* of the symbolic order. The impossibility of securing objects within closed systems of rational

thought or cognition, and the corresponding problematic of securing a stable identity, illustrate not just the fragility of the symbolic order but its complete absence. The introduction of the 'Book' to suture this situation encapsulates within its folds as much the power to suture the symbolic as the necessity to seal the symbolic with divine decree, the Word of the Other. The 'Book' indeed functions to re-symbolize at a primeval level the myth of divine signification and creation (Bhabha 'Signs').

To return to the issue of objects then, transient objects reveal the symbolic system as fallacious for it enjoys a relation with the *Thing* (*das Ding*) as I explain in chapter one. That is to say, the object whether it is a material object like the *chapatti*, an imaginary object like imperial identity as righteous (chapter two), or symbolic as in the case of sexuality (chapter three), can be never be fully explained nor secured in context of the essentially fantastic position designated to it within the symbolic order. For an object alongside occupying the position of the imaginary and the symbolic equally occupies the hole in the Real, thus standing both for it and over it [in the sense of barring it]. Lacan elaborates this character of the object in his discussion of the 'fort-da' game in the *Four Fundamental Concepts* (62-63). In his reading of the game played by Freud's grand-child with a cotton-reel, Lacan clarifies that though the game "go *some way* to satisfying the pleasure principle," it also entails "self-mutilation" since the "reel is not the mother reduced to a little ball […] it is a small part of the subject that detaches itself from him" (62) [emphasis mine]. With this object, that is "*his* object" or 'him as objectified,' the child endeavors to take possession of the primary lack that creeps in with the mother's appearances and disappearances (ibid.). The object, therefore, is at once the object cause of desire – playing with it offers *some* satisfaction, it goes "some way to satisfying desire" – and also that which reconstitutes, retroactively, absolute satisfaction qua the (m)Other as impossible. It is this tenuous and

paradoxical stature of the object, as scholars of 'Thing theory' also show, which factors into the subject-object relation the grain of anxiety from the very outset.[293] This is precisely the argument Lacan makes in explaining the structural presence of anxiety as a haunting. For the object as fixed for gaining pleasure, identity, and recognition is also the object that functions as an impediment to the complete satisfaction of pleasure; it retains the real. Repetition here features as the natural defense and is on the side of drive. Repetition as drive emerges as the symptom of the impossibility but functions to exercise a second level of defense, albeit a deception, by opening up through the circulatory trajectory of drive around an object a certain semblance of stability of that object. I use semblance to direct attention to what Lacan says about the 'object of desire' as either a fantasy or a lure. Or, the object entraps the subject in a diversion: desire. This distraction of desire is the only thing that saves the subject from confronting the horrific impossibility of being (*Fundamental* 186).[294]

The issue of repetition in colonial discourse should be therefore considered in relation to the issue of objectification/stereotyping of the Other, since the latter as a function of desire is inextricably tied up with the former, repetition, which represents the real as drive. This is also Bhabha's point when he asserts that objectification and repetition are related through a process of "binding" that constructs "the discursive and political practices of racial and cultural hierarchization" within colonial discourse (TOQ 96). We need to outgrow the hypothesis that compulsive articulations of otherness in colonial discourse are related to questions of stability or instability of the other as object. Or, of repetition as a resulting from the inherent instability of

[293] See, Brown [ed.] *Things*; espc. Schwenger 'Words and the Murder of the Thing' (135-149).
[294] Colonial discourse in its anxiety-ridden repetitiveness succeeds in suturing the subject-object relation only because that discourse by way of colonial machinery informs the colonized subject as well. This renders the colonized subject incapable of disrupting the parameters of discourse, which subjects him through ways other than those that make sense. The colonized is thus actively encouraged to form 'legitimate' associations; they are entrapped in the desire for these organizations and to engage in civilized dialogue with the colonizer. For a discussion of how desire functions ideologically in the colonial scenario see chapter 5 above.

the signifier, in the Derridean sense; i.e. the signifier as failing to ascertain meaning as constant. Instead, we should open ourselves to the possibility of affect – repetition as drive enters the colonial experiential space at the same time that discourse and language are introduced as tools for 'capturing' an alien culture as fixed and/or knowable. In other words, anxiety enters the regime of colonial experience at the moment of an ideological shift within European territorial aspirations; the moment when ethics of territorial occupation collided with new found morals of Enlightenment modernity. This moment in Lacan is signified by the move from the Master to the University discourse, from feudalism to mercantile capitalism. In a sense, then, it is the problem of rationally negotiating colonialism with the demands of territorial occupation that contributes to this tension. It is the regime of reason accompanying colonialism that conflicts with what colonialism in reality is: a gross violation of Other spaces, cultures, and lives that the colonizer attempt to scientize and rationalize through discourse and violence.

The emphasis on production of knowledge distinguishes 'modern' or European colonialism from earlier forms of invasive 'no quarter given to the natives' colonization. However, the weakness for explaining and justifying territorial approximation through rational knowledge earmarks colonialism as a highly neurotic experience fraught with anxiety and driven by compulsive reconstructions of imaginary origins of power, race, gender, and modernity. Following Ania Loomba, one can posit the difference between old and modern colonialisms in terms of the restructuring of cultural, political, and economic structures of the colonized peoples by the colonizer. This restructuring involved "drawing [the colonized] into a complex relationship with their own [the colonizer's]" socio-politico-ideological cultures, which the latter believed as superior to that of the colonized's (Loomba 9). It is the Manichean character of colonialism – the impossibility of negotiating ground realities necessary to colonize the Other

space with the discourses justifying or explaining the colonial venture as a divinely ordained act or as a political necessity – which makes the colonizer's discourse analogous to a neurotic's engagement with questions of reality and being; namely, 'am I dead or alive.'

This neurotic side of colonialism is evidenced by the presence of anxiety in the colonial experiential space. The colonizer's relation to the colonized as object is akin to the neurotic's engagement with the object – the colonizer is both possessed by the colonized and disgusted by it. The colonized becomes a part of the colonizer's life; that thing in the master which is not quite the master's, the thing defining the colonizer in terms of similarity and difference.

For Bhabha, however, the ambivalent status of the object stems from a strong fetishistic treatment of objects and others as objects within colonial discourse. Bhabha links up with Said in arguing on the disjointed nature of colonial experiential space, but maintains that what creates the tension is the fetishistic approach of the colonizer toward objects or the colonized (TOQ 102, 106). He observes, "The myth of historical origination – racial purity, cultural priority – produced in relation to the colonial stereotype functions to 'normalize' the multiple beliefs and split subjects that constitute colonial discourse as a consequence of its process of disavowal" (106). He accentuates his reading of the stereotype as a fetish object further when he asserts, "The fetish or stereotype gives access to an 'identity' which is predicated as much on mastery and pleasure as it is on anxiety and defense, for it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition of difference and disavowal of it" (107).

There is a minute theoretical fallacy in Bhabha's reading of the stereotype as fetish. It entails, most importantly, a failure to adequately represent the contours of the subject qua the Other in fetishism or perversion. For in fetishism the relationship of the subject with the fetish object is mediated through the agency of the Paternal prohibition – the 'No' of the Father. And it

is around this prohibition of the Father that the jouissance of the fetishist comes into existence. Besides, if Bhabha's argument draws support from the practice of colonialism and colonial experience, it must be said that the notion of the 'other' as fetish in colonialism does not hold water simply because the qualifying element of jouissance of the object as instituted via the prohibition of the Father is absent there. For there is no prohibitive interface in the construction and enjoyment of the other as a fetish in colonialism, instead the other as stereotype is endorsed by the symbolic Other. Nothing clarifies this more than Bhabha's own example drawn from Fanon about the Negro, the child, and the Mother (TOQ 108). The child's identification of the Negro as an other is not censured by the (m)Other, but as Bhabha himself notes, it is the colonizer's culture which interpellates the child through narratives of black demons fighting white crusaders thereby allowing her the symbolic playing field from within which to speak, feel, and be (108). Therefore, to return to my earlier point regarding colonial experience and discourse as neurotic and the other as a neurotic object within it, let me state that in contrast to the fetish object as taken up by a pervert, the neurotic's object of desire is not only acknowledged by a symbolic mandate but it is also 'named' such. The function of colonial discourse in 'naming' the Other qua otherness – the fiction that passes off as impartial, scientific knowledge – always lays bare a prepared field for the colonizer to entertain his stereotypes as valid and justified. It is on basis of this misrecognition that power circulates (materially as well as psychologically) within the colonial space.[295] It is also on basis of this misrecognition that repetition comes into existence as drive. The subject neurotically 'enveloped' by a fictional, forceful objectification of the Other at the level of identification, desire and recognition is compelled to respond to the fragility of the object, which discourse can merely succeed in ascertaining temporally as a semblance. Anxiety which Bhabha identifies as an effect of disavowal is present within the

[295] This is one of the central points in Grosrichard's *The Sultan's Court*.

subject-object relation as constructed within the symbolic order prior to any subjective (conscious or unconscious) agency revealing its existence.

Anxiety is a product of (imprecise, fragile, forced) objectification, something I term 'forced metaphor,' and the resultant condition of the object as it falls outside of the symbolic order as a remainder (Lacan *X* session xiii, 6.3.63). The originary cause of anxiety is the possibility of interchangeability – of objects transforming into things and, in the process, revitalizing the traits of the Thing (*Das Ding*); the encounter posing a direct threat to the subject. In seminar X, this is precisely the function Lacan attributes to anxiety – anxiety constricts the gap between desire and jouissance, thereby materializing the Phallus (Φ) as the primary object of desire on the same side as the Law/Father (session ix, 16.1.63). Anxiety in 'The Other Question' is, however, not the anxiety involving the confrontation with this enigmatic truth of desire being on the side of Law or the real. Instead, it is anxiety as it haunts the subject-object structural relation; and not because the subject constructs the object in any particular way, rather because the object comes to exist within the symbolic order as a result of a more primary source of anxiety – castration. The object in the subject-object dialectic paradoxically functions to suture this anxiety while retaining its originary relationship with the Thing, consequently adding into the subject-object fantastic equation of desire and recognition an element of anxiety. Bhabha acknowledges this when he writes, the "stereotype is […] an impossible object […] at once a substitution and a shadow" (TOQ 116-117). Bhabha must be praised for putting his finger on this aspect of anxiety but criticized, perhaps, for never explaining or elaborating it fully.

In 'Articulating the Archaic,' Bhabha moves very near to identifying another character of colonial anxiety – anxiety as "constituent" or anxiety over encountering the real. If in 'The Other Question' he locates anxiety at the level of discourse, language, and the symbolic order, that is to

say, he ponders the limitation of the signifier as a metaphor in conclusively arresting the 'return of the repressed' and as a consequence the colonial order and discourse as continuously fraught with an inherent tension and needing repeated suturings, in 'Articulating the Archaic' anxiety is associated with the complete failure of language/discourse to either represent or symbolically negotiate the anxiety over the unrepresentable, non-symbolizable Thing. Or, what Bhabha calls the 'nonsense' of colonial experience. Anxiety here is with the evaporation (or, fading) of subjectivity and its imaginary coordinates in the wake of an impossibility of suturing the diachronic moments of the colonial space within linear grand narratives. If the stereotype retains an anxious haunting it also drives towards re-constructions of the other in order to sustain the fantasy. In contrast, the nonsensical ambivalence of the 'Ou-boum' of the Marabar Caves (to take one example from Bhabha) enacts a forced traversing of that fantasy to open up a domain beyond language and subjective/fantasmatic experience. This domain is the real in Lacanian sense since language cannot represent this experience of the real.

Bhabha returns to this agency of anxiety, i.e. anxiety as it functions to reveal or signals a domain beyond sense and self, in his essay 'By Bread Alone' where he discusses the Mutiny and the inscrutable *chapattis*. In this essay, Bhabha points out how these 'known' material objects, the *chapattis*, ruptured established systems of colonial knowledge by their sheer nonsensical itineraries. The rumor of these organic missives, Bhabha shows, opened up a grim anxious space between the colonizer and the colonized and between the colonial military and native civil lines. Nothing remained certain, no one reliable, as every gesture and each day brought new anxieties to the British camp. The Mutiny of 1857 is an uncivilized, regressive, irrational moment within colonialism. The inexplicable 'Ou-boum' or mysterious *chapattis* enact a rupture within an already fragile colonial order held together by 'bridge parties' or an affective family romance

between European officers and their subordinate native sepoys. The *things* announce the impossibility of further containment of the colony through discourse. These constitute, better still *stage*, as acts, the limits of the colonial symbolic system. The Other in its plurality is beyond the colonizer's symbolic order and knowledge, and as such inexplicable. These can only be read as nonsense. According to Bhabha, the impact of the *non-sense* lies precisely in vitiating and displacing "those dualities in which the colonial space is traditionally divided: nature/culture, chaos/civility" (ATA 177). What nonsense as disruption achieves is the ultimate dismounting of the fantasy, for "the sign of identity and reality found in the work of empire is slowly undone" (ATA 176-177).

Bhabha is spot on in referring to Lacan's discussion of the *vel* in context of this second type of anxiety. For what echoes through the Marabar Caves or the *chappatis* in post-mutiny fictions are instances of authorial collapse in face of a complete enigma – what happened in the caves or what do these circulating *chapattis* signify? Both elicit responses outside of language – in the case of Adela's hallucinations and scarring of the body from cacti, and, in case of the infamous *chapattis*, an inability to form judgment.[296] If anything, these experiences remain beyond knowledge and representation, creating a state of desperation similar to psychosis (Guha *Elementary* 225; Bhabha 'Bread' 294). For, indeed, as Lacan contends, the experience after the lifting of the veil is too momentous for words to represent ('Signification'). This experience can only be felt only at the level of the body, as ritualistic flagellation performed in ancient mystery cults and end with the death of the subject. Is it not an end for Adela too at the end of the trial? In fact, one would not be wrong in saying that Adela as the 'subject supposed to know' or as the 'subject who wants to know (India)' dies even before the trial begins. For she fails to figure out what *really* happened in the caves – did she imagine it or was it real? Her failure to testify at the

[296] See, Bhabha's discussion on Kaye's confusion with the meaning of chapattis in 'By Bread Alone, 287-289.

trial represents her as a stain that denudes the imaginary of imperial masterly subject in the eyes of the colonized. Similarly, in context of the *chapattis*, imperial historian Kaye's 'undecidability' on what caused the Mutiny, his failure to arrive at a conclusion like Adela on a matter of such great interest, can be read as the death of the historian to rationally investigate, speak, communicate, and enlighten. Death of all those ideals that constitute the self of the colonizer as the master! Bhabha acknowledges this when he says, "Cultural difference, as Adela experienced it, in the nonsense of the Marabar caves, is not the acquisition or accumulation of additional cultural knowledge: it is the momentous, if momentary, extinction of the recognizable object of culture in the disturbed artifice of its signification, at the edge of experience" (ATA 179-180). This 'extinction' of the object, its disappearance, signifies the death of the subject as well. For the failure of speech or symbols to suture a space that is inexplicable confronts the subject with its castrated existence. The imaginary masks of identity, authority, and rationality are peeled off. The subject emerges bereft of all defenses – stripped, negated, and as an object looking back at one's self.

It is in this looking back, seeing the self as negated, that anxiety is situated. The Mutiny was a moment when the colonizer was forced to look back at himself, his knowledge, and the edifices of power that he thought were adequate to restrain the colonized.

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